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**I N D I A :**

**ITS GOVERNMENT**

**UNDER A BUREAUCRACY.**



11

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ITS GOVERNMENT  
UNDER A BUREAUCRACY.

BY  
JOHN DICKINSON, JUN., M.R.A.S., M.R.GEOG.S.

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"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto."—TER.

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## PREFACE.

FREQUENT intercourse with men possessing great experience in the administration of Indian affairs, induced me to give my earnest attention to the investigation of the subject, and has eventually led me to lay the result of my inquiries before the public. My principal authorities have been :—

Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons, in 1848, on the growth of Cotton in India.

Report of Expenditure on Public Works for 10 years, printed by order of the House of Commons, in 1851.

Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian Territories in June, 1852.

Report of the Bombay Cotton Committee, in 1847.

Letters on the Cotton and Commerce of Western India, reprinted from the "Times."

Files of the "Friend of India," for 1850-51-52.

Files of the "Bombay Times."

Reports, Books and Pamphlets on Scinde.

Mill and Wilson's History of India.

Briggs' Land-tax in India.

Kaye's Afghanistan.

Campbell's Modern India.

Chapman's Cotton and Commerce of India.

Royle's Culture of Cotton in India.

Shore's Indian Notes.

Grant's Bombay Cotton and Indian Railways.

Lecture on Cotton, delivered at the Society of Arts, before H.R.H. Prince Albert, by the President of the Chamber of Commerce at Manchester.

Letters on the Renewal of the East India Company's Charter,  
by Lieut.-General Briggs, published in the "Indian News."  
Remarks on the Affairs of India, by J. Sullivan, Esq.  
Debates in the Court of Proprietors in 1848-49.  
Sundry Pamphlets: and various authorities referred to in the  
text.

Besides the above, I have been indebted to Indian friends for an immense deal of information, advice and active assistance, without which I could not have composed this work.

I am prepared to see a portion of the English press contrast my warmth of expression in the following pages, with the cooler tone of certain petitioners from a particular Presidency. However, any one, who attentively considers the grievances I have pointed out, will see that a body of merchants residing in the capital of a Presidency, were not the men who suffered most from them, and did not even feel some of them at all. Moreover, during nearly three years that I have been occupied with the subject, I have seen no prospect of support until quite lately, but on the contrary, a very clear prospect of great political parties uniting to oppose any reform in our Indian administration. Under such circumstances, although it might have shewn more philosophy to describe the abuses of the present system and its national danger with indifference, it was perhaps natural for a man who loved his country, to feel and speak more warmly.

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“ to them, indicates no desire to promote the interest,  
“ of the community, and is simply an exhibition of  
“ that morbid fondness for secrecy which belongs to  
“ all corporations.”

And this is the real state of the case : the Government of India is a government of secrecy in a stronger sense than any other Government now in existence ; the footprint on the sand was not more alarming to Robinson Crusoe than a trace of inquiry into the mysteries of their administration is to the Authorities of India, and of course while a despotic Government maintains this “ system of secrecy,” its servants who can, will not speak out, and as an inevitable consequence, the public, who cannot get at the truth, become “ apathetic and indifferent to the concerns of India.” And this is not all : besides the system of secrecy, there is a system of mystification, of eternally deceiving the public, by flattering pictures of the condition of the natives ; which is of as old a date as that irresponsible government which I denounce as the bane of India. The historian Mill continually adverts to this practice. He remarks, that it is always the interest of the Minister of the day “ to prevent inspection ; to lull “ suspicion asleep ; to ward off inquiry ; to inspire a “ blind confidence ; to praise incessantly the management of affairs in India ; and by the irresistible force “ of his influence, make other men praise it :” and he adds, that by the interest of the Minister, “ complaint “ is extinguished, and the voice of praise raised in its “ stead”—and all parties in turn get committed to

•

this system by the changes of ministry. On one occasion, after noticing a rebuke administered to the Indian Authorities by the House of Commons for this system of deception, the historian says they only followed the beaten common track of misrepresentation which the instruments of Government are seldom without a motive to tread; and farther on, "nothing is more remarkable than the propensity of all sorts of persons connected with the Indian Government, to infer from any thing and every thing, the *flourishing state of the country.*" On another occasion, he notices "the unintermitting concert of praises, sung from year to year, upon the Indian Government, and upon the increasing happiness of the Indian people, while they were all the while sinking into deeper poverty and wretchedness." Elsewhere he points out the ease with which the results of Indian administration can be misrepresented in this country, and warns the public that they are by no means sufficiently on their guard against the deception. Now I have endeavoured to shew in my seventh chapter, what were the effects of this deception, in the passing of the last three Charters; and in my fifth and sixth chapters, to shew the way in which it is going on now; and when I consider that it is employed to resist the strongest conceivable claims on our justice; to say nothing of our humanity; and to perpetuate the "nightmare oppression lying heavy on many million hearts" in India; this system of mystification appears to me perfectly shocking!—it seems to call for a judgment on the nation that employs

it. It is written : "The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips : and the tongue that speaketh proud things ; which have said, With our tongue will we prevail : we are they that ought to speak, who is lord over us?—Now for the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy ; and because of the deep sighing of the poor ; —I will up, saith the Lord, and will help every one from him that swelleth against him. . . ."

Aye, reader ! there are many signs and warnings in India at this moment, and if the present system is allowed to go on, it will soon expose our empire to a greater peril than it has ever yet encountered.

On reading the list of official appointments in the present Ministry, I contemplated for an instant the altering or even suppressing this work, which was then in the press. On second thoughts, however, I determined to publish it as it was, because my quarrel is not so much with particular men as with a particular system—a system which makes all who are drawn into its vortex either the accomplices, the dupes, or the tools of mis-government. And until the Ministry announce some intention of changing such a system, it would be at least premature to relax in my efforts to obtain justice for India from any confidence inspired by names alone.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE THEORY IN CANNON ROW.

ON the second of April in the present year, the Prime Minister told the House of Lords, that "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India rests." This was the truth; and a truth whose incalculably important consequences are not appreciated by the people of this country. However, those who have an interest in keeping things as they are, and preventing any change in the actual system of Government, were exceedingly disconcerted by Lord Derby's plain speaking, and have been labouring ever since to persuade the public not to believe the truths disclosed by him. For this purpose the old fable of a double Government and a balance of power has been repeated to the world by every channel of publicity which official influence could command; and it has been asserted with the utmost confidence, that the control of the finances and the management of administrative details is in the hands of the Court of Directors. Let us see then whether there is anything to corroborate Lord Derby's statement? The Chairman of the Court of Directors



stated in his place in Parliament, on the 19th of April last, that all letters and despatches come to the Directors, and that when they have come to a resolution on the business in hand, they send their despatch to the Board of Control, "who either approve or disapprove of it;" but that the Directors have a right to call upon the Board to give their reasons for their alterations of it, if the Board think it their duty to insist upon them. We learn from this that the Board of Control can "disapprove and alter" the government of the Court of Directors: but it appears to me, that if the Board has the power to alter the spirit and letter of the Directors' despatches, and uses such a power, the Directors are no more independent of the President of the Board of Control, than the clerks of the Foreign, Colonial, and War Offices, are independent of the Secretaries for those departments; and that the Directors must perform much the same functions as the head clerks of Government offices. Moreover, the statement of the Chairman, that all letters and despatches come to the Directors, is inconsistent with the following evidence from still better authority. In the Committee on Official Salaries, which sat last year, the President of the Board of Control was asked—"Do you correspond with the Governor-general of India, and other high functionaries, the Governors of Madras and Bombay, directly, without the intervention of the Chairman of the India House?" Answer—"Of course I do, privately." Here then I submit are strong grounds for presuming that Lord

Derby told the simple truth when he informed the House of Lords, that "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India rests." But, besides this presumptive evidence, the letter of the law clearly gives the Board the power of conducting the whole administration, by investing it with "full power and authority to superintend, direct, and control all acts, operations, and concerns of the said Company, which in any wise relate to or concern the Government, or revenues, of the said territories . . .;" again, by prohibiting the Directors "from issuing any orders, instructions, despatches, official letters, or communications whatever, relating to India, or to the Government thereof, until the same shall have been sanctioned by the Board . . .;" and further, by compelling the Directors either to prepare instructions and orders, upon any subject whatever, at fourteen days' notice from the Board, or else to transmit the orders of the Board on the subject to India; which gives the power of initiative to the Board whenever it likes to use it. Moreover, it was distinctly admitted by the creators of the Board, that they had transferred to it the whole power of administration. Mr. Pitt said, "there was no one step that could have been taken previous to the passing of the Act of 1784, by the Court of Directors, that the Board of Control had not now a right to take by virtue of the power and authority vested in it by that Act." Mr. Dundas said, "Without the whole powers of Government the Board of

"Control would be a nugatory institution." Lord Grenville, one of its first members, said, "The whole authority of the Government was actually committed to the Board; and the carrying on the Government in the name of the Company was only what the Company had done themselves, in the case of Indian princes whose rule they had superseded." Finally, a former President of the Board of Control said, in 1838, "In that Board for the last fifty years has the real effective Government of India resided." I think this is sufficient evidence that Lord Derby's statement in the House of Lords was not a misrepresentation, and that the real state of the case was correctly defined by the historian Mill, who says, "The real, sole governing power in India is the Board of Control; and it only makes use of the Court of Directors as an instrument, as a subordinate officer for the management of details, and the preparation of business for the cognizance of the superior power."

If this definition be correct, it is evident that the power of the Directors must depend entirely upon the degree to which the Board allows them to manage the business of detail, and such a power manifestly corresponds to that of the head clerks in Government offices. In fact, the only distinction I can perceive between the functions of Directors and those of Government clerks, is in the privilege of the former to protest in writing against the measures of the Board; but if it be true, as I have heard and believe, that the Directors' protests are treated with very little ceremony, and

habitually disregarded by the Board ; and because these protests cannot exercise the slightest influence on the Parliament or the public, from whom they are concealed, I do not see that such a distinction makes any real difference between the power of the Directors and that of the head clerks of the Treasury, or Colonial Office. But the reader may say, supposing that the Directors are no more than clerks of the Board of Control, what is the harm of it ? The harm is this : it may happen, as it does at this moment, that a President and two Secretaries who are new to the affairs of India, and have none of them ever set foot in the country, are invested with the secret, irresponsible despotism over an empire as large as the whole of Europe, comprised of different nations who are frequently high-spirited and warlike races, and containing within it such an abundance of inflammable materials as to have induced the writers and statesmen who have had most experience, and are the highest authorities on the subject, to declare unanimously, that without a knowledge of the institutions, habits, feelings, and prejudices of the natives of India, their European masters are always liable to make mistakes which may produce a conflagration, and place the empire in peril. For instance, let it be supposed that an ignorant President of the Board of Control decides on some measure which is a climax of iniquity and impolicy ; a Director, saturated with information on the subject, writes a protest against it, clearly exposing by the light of his experience the characteristic bearings of

the question, and exhibiting the series of evils which must ensue from the adoption of the Board's measure; of course, if the President were responsible to Parliament, he would be forced to think twice before he acted in defiance of such a protest as this; but as it is, considering the Director as no better than a clerk, he tosses the protest into a wilderness of records, and pursues his plan without modification;—let it be supposed that an Affghan war is the consequence, the conclusions of the Director are verified to the letter, until, after the sacrifice of a British army and a frightful waste of human life and treasure, it turns out that the Board's measure has been as impolitic as it was iniquitous, and has converted a host of neighbouring nations who were previously disposed to be friends into implacable enemies, while it has robbed one or more generations of our native fellow-subjects of the local expenditure and attention to their social progress which was due to them from British justice, and has saddled themselves and their posterity with a crushing burthen of debt.

When all this is the natural consequence of investing an ignorant Minister with the secret irresponsible despotism over a vast empire, can the reader ask what is the harm of a system which exposes us every day to a recurrence of dangers, similar in kind to the above, while they may be next time infinitely greater in degree? Surely, if Lord Derby's statement was correct that, "in the Board of Control, practically speaking, the whole administration of the affairs of India

“rests,” and if the Board must exercise “*the whole powers of government*,” it will be prudent to provide for the responsibility of this depository of supreme power. But besides the proofs already furnished of the truth of Lord Derby’s description, it has been entirely confirmed since by the evidence of Lord Ellenborough. His Lordship said that, “the President of the Board of Control can now over-rule the Directors;” that, “they can do no more than express an opinion;” and that “they have in fact, no authority.” He said that, with a Court of Directors at one end of the system, and a President of the Board of Control, with a large body of intelligent clerks, at the other, he could not say how the government was conducted; but added, “I know that when I was at the Board of Control, I conducted the government, there is no doubt about that.” So then the power is in the hands of the President of the Board of Control; and if he does not know how to use it, he may ask his ignorant secretaries and intelligent clerks; and we shall see presently what these gentlemen make of the irresponsible despotism of India.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PRACTICE IN LEADENHALL STREET.

THE body in which supreme power originally resided, and which still gives its name to the Government, is the East India Company; that is, the Court of Proprietors. As the description of this body given by Lord Derby in his speech of April 2nd, was very clear and correct, I will again quote his words. "With that Act of 1833, the Court of Proprietors ceased to have any control or interest whatever in the affairs of India. The whole business of the Court of Proprietors at this moment consists in receiving the dividends upon their stock, and in electing the members of the Court of Directors. Further than that they have no function whatever to perform. It is true they may meet and discuss together, but with regard to the legislation of India, any decision or vote of the whole Court of Proprietors need not exercise the slightest influence over the conduct of the government." As this statement was literally true, and the Court of Proprietors has long been notoriously and entirely subservient to the Court of Directors, I will at once pass on to the description of this Corporation. The Court of Directors consists of twenty-four members, whose qualification is the possession of £1000.

stock ; but as one-fourth of this body go out of office every four years, and must remain out for twelve months, the permanent number of Directors is really thirty, of whom twenty-four form the Court, while six remain a year out of office until it is their turn to be re-elected. This re-election is a matter of course, because since the Directors prefer to hold their places for life, and always support their former colleagues on a re-election, the entirely subservient constituency go on electing them for life, and in many instances long after they are unfit to attend to the affairs of India. This Court has, with a few reservations the nominal and generally the substantial power of making the Home appointments in the Indian Civil Service. The composition of this Corporation is at present exceedingly defective, for although there are some warm and enlightened friends of India among the Directors, such men are always of necessity a very small minority in the Court. The reasons for this are, firstly, that the disgusting incidents of a canvass for the Direction, deter almost all the distinguished servants of Government, who return from India, from being candidates for the office, although frequently in the prime of their faculties, and capable of doing many years hard work in this country ; secondly, that the value of the patronage draws many men into the Direction, and keeps them in it, who are from various causes unfit for its duties, such as bankers, merchants, and directors of companies, whose business in the Indian government is simply the distribution of patronage, and a certain



number of worn-out old men, who are incapable of managing, and some even of understanding the business they are supposed to transact. This Court forms annually three Committees, besides the secret Committee consisting of the Chairman, Deputy-Chairman, and senior member of the Court. The Chairs hold the same rank *ex officio* in the three Committees, which are, 1. political and military; 2. finance and home; 3. revenue, judicial, and legislative. It may be as well to explain here what the business is which is transacted by the Court.

It must be remembered that England governs an Empire in India, as large as the whole of Europe, inhabited by as many different races, and containing provinces as extensive as European kingdoms, and as densely peopled: for instance, the population of the Bengal Presidency, is larger than that of France, the population of the Agra Presidency larger than that of Great Britain, and so on; and as the business of this Empire is referred down to minute details to the Home Government, so that nothing should escape its supervision, it is difficult to give the reader an idea of the vast mass of correspondence which comes home to England from India. When the reader considers, that many despatches are accompanied by such a mass of documents as "cannot be even examined without considerable labour and time—that they amount to 2, 3, 4, 5, and occasionally 20,000 pages," he may conceive the tons of papers which the Home Government is supposed to go through. In Lord Broughton's evidence before the Official Salaries Com-

mittee, he stated that with one single despatch 45,000 pages of "collections" were sent. The first great evil of this system is, that the administration of India is clogged and impeded in a most mischievous degree, —in a degree which reduces to despair the most zealous and able of the Company's servants, and after all a good deal of business is unavoidably slurred over, and either pretended to be done, or not done at all. I saw the same thing happen in France during the reign of the late King Louis Philippe. The abuse of centralization had drawn the mass of administrative details to Paris, and of course the business of the country was ruinously delayed, and either badly done, or left undone. While the Prefects would not take responsibility on themselves, because they were likely to be reprimanded, and have their measures reversed by a central Government (or rather by its irresponsible clerks!) which could not possibly understand the grounds of their decisions half so well as themselves, the supreme Government by its bureaucratic, "paper-assier" spirit, and passion for governing in details, left the country in fact either without an administration or with a wretchedly bad one. This was one main cause of the revolution of 1848 in France, and St. Simon points out in his memoirs that a similar weakness of Louis XIV. for governing in details, was a main cause of the ruin of France under his reign. One of the wisest acts of the present Ruler of France has been to restore specifically the mass of the local

administration to the Prefects, investing them with real power and proportionate responsibility, and depriving the Paris bureaucracy of its authority.

A similar reform is now most urgently required in our Indian administration, for the second great evil of referring such a mass of details to the Home Government is that it throws the real power into the hands of an irresponsible Bureaucracy. This is the class which Burke denounced as "the creatures of the desk, and the creatures of favour," and which he described in the following passage:—"The tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species. There is no trade so vile and mechanical as government in their hands. Virtue is not their habit. They are out of themselves in any course of conduct recommended only by conscience and glory. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the interest of States, passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. The calculators compute them out of their senses. The jesters and buffoons shame them out of everything grand and elevated. Littleness in object and in means, to them appears soundness and sobriety." Now, on examining into the details of the measures pursued in India, we shall find that they bear the stamp of the "vulgar politicians" described by Burke, and the reader will not wonder at the extraordinary mal-administration described in the following chapters, if he bears it in mind that "the creatures of the desk and the

creatures of favour," are really governing India, and the Home Government is at bottom a Bureaucracy.

But such is the fact : from the sheer physical impossibility of an Indian Minister or Director examining the shiploads of business referred from India, even if they were disposed to do so, it is necessary to maintain a large establishment of clerks to do the work for them, with departments at the India House and Board of Control, corresponding to the departments of the Government abroad, and entailing an expense of £160,000 a-year on the people of India, while the result of the system is to throw the real work of preparing the despatches into the hands of the clerks at the India House, and that of altering them into the hands of the clerks at the Board of Control. The reader will see this from the mode of transacting the business. When a despatch arrives from India, it is referred in the first instance to the Examiner's department to which it belongs, after which the Chairs confer with the official in charge of that department, and settle with him the tenor of a reply, and transmit a draft of this reply to the Indian Minister, in what is technically called "P. C.;" that is to say, "previous communication."

Now it is evident that, partly from the annual rotation in the functions of the Directors, and every fourth year in the men themselves, and principally from the mass of the business the Chairs must, in this preliminary stage of P. C. depend mainly on the clerks who are permanently in office, for information, advice, and

assistance. Nay, such is this dependence, that even in a discussion in the Court of Proprietors, after previous notice, it is pitiable to see the Chairman referring to a secretary who sits by his side, and keeps on whispering, and prompting, and stopping him, as if he were a mere puppet; and probably the Minister at the other end of the system is in the same predicament. However, in this stage of "P. C." if there is a difference of opinion on the draft, it is discussed, and almost invariably settled in friendly communication between the Minister and the Chairs. Finally, the draft is returned by the Minister either adopted or altered; and then it is submitted to the Committee of Directors superintending the department to which it belongs, with all the papers bearing on the case, to be considered, and discussed, and adopted or altered; and afterwards it is exposed to the same process in the aggregate Court, and then goes, for the first time as an official communication, to the Minister. Now, Messrs. Melville and Shepherd are delighted with the success of this system of "previous communication," in bringing about an agreement between the Minister and the Chairs,—in facilitating business, and saving time. No doubt it does all this, but how does it do it? by stripping the Directors' Committees of all their importance and usefulness! for when once the draft is settled, what chance have the dissentient members of any Committee of resisting the Minister, the Chairs, their majority in the aggregate Court, and the bureaucracy?—All they can do is to complain to their friends in

private, and to record a protest, which is of no earthly use, except to shew that it is in vain for them to prove to demonstration that the Government is going wrong, when once the irresponsible bureaucracy has decided its course. I ask if this is not an intolerable abuse? Is it not evident that this "previous communication" system is reversing the first intention, and the whole scope and purpose of the Directors' official existence? Is it not plain that if the opinion of the Directors is to be of any use to the Minister at all, it should go to him, not *after* his mind is made up by the opinion of "intelligent clerks," not *after* he has decided on the matter in hand, but *before*? Does it not stand to reason that if it be worth while for Indian business to go through a Committee and an aggregate Court of Directors, who are presumed to sift it thoroughly, and express a deliberate opinion upon it, all this should be done before the first communication goes to the Minister, and not after "intelligent clerks" on both sides have superficially examined and decided the question? It is not that the Directors should govern: the Indian Minister must of course govern; *as he does now*; and as every Minister ought to do in his department; but he should receive the Directors' deliberate counsel before he makes up his mind, and not after; he should be bound, *as he is now*, to state his reasons in writing, if he disapproved of the policy advised by the Directors; and instead of the "previous communication," there should be an "after communication" with the Chairs, in case of a difference of opinion and

the Minister's adhering to his own views. The Directors would thus be some check upon the Indian Minister, particularly if they were the efficient and experienced body that they ought to be; at least they would be an invaluable Council to him, for the only real check that can be imposed upon him is parliamentary responsibility, for which I have proposed a very simple plan in my seventh chapter. As it is now, the Court of Directors are a mere cloak for the "irresponsible despotism" of the Minister; and they are a source of injury to India and danger to England, by the grasping spirit of the majority of their members for patronage. Before I touch on this point I must remark, that there is on the face of it something wrong in a system by which, as it is said, "the Directors are paid in patronage"—that "their salaries are only £300 a-year, because they are paid in patronage." We ought to cut down a mischievous bureaucracy, and save enough by the reduction to give the Directors competent salaries, like all other public servants, and so get rid of the very improper phrase now employed, that "the Directors are paid in patronage." Why, in this matter-of-fact country, such language naturally puts it into the heads of Directors that their patronage may be used in a way that will pay them—pay well too!—and it is notorious that the managers of banks and companies who take so much trouble to get into the Direction, are "wise in their generation." Under the present system there are two fatal consequences of the Directors being "paid in patronage:"—1st, it

enslaves the Directors to the Indian Minister, by their fear that if they oppose him he may use his parliamentary omnipotence to strip them of their patronage ; 2ndly, it gives the majority of the Court an insatiable spirit of grasping ; of grasping territory, and grasping all the valuable Indian appointments for their European nominees, in spite of the emphatic condemnation of this system by our greatest Indian statesmen, which passion of the Directors is doing incalculable mischief in India, and makes our Government hated by the educated classes of the natives. It is therefore indispensable to reform the present abuses in the composition of this Court—to exclude the superannuated old men, by opening the elections on the annual retirement of one-fourth of the members—to exclude those who belong to any other profession or occupation, and who only enter the Direction to use their patronage for the interest of their private banks and companies—and to abolish a canvass, which costs about £4000, and often extends over a period of seven years, so as to make a Director's personal experience of Indian administration seven years in arrear of its actual state when he is elected—to abolish this canvass, which deters nearly all the fittest men, the most efficient and experienced in Indian affairs, from becoming candidates for the Direction, by adopting the plan suggested by Colonel Sykes ; and finally, to provide expressly that a certain number of the Directors shall have served upwards of twelve years in India.

I will conclude this part of my subject by a notice



of the present value and mode of distributing the patronage. When the number of appointments for the year is ascertained, the whole are divided into 28 equal parts, of which two are allotted to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, two to the President of the Board of Control, and one to each of the Directors. Taking the average of seventeen years since the Charter of 1833, there have been sent out about 28 writers, and as many assistant surgeons, and chaplains or other officers, independent of from 250 to 300 cadets annually, affording to each Director a patronage which, if sold at the rate of a cadetship actually proved to be purchased in 1849 at £1,050, and a writership at £3000, the annual value of a single share of patronage would not fall short of £14,000 or £15,000, and that of the Chairs and the Indian Minister from £28,000 to £30,000 per annum. Besides his patronage as above, the President of the Board of Control directs the expenditure to any extent of "secret service" money, which as such is not accounted for on the books, and has on some occasions exceeded £100,000 in one year. How differently do we deal with the poor ryot's money and our own ! The Secretary for Foreign Affairs is only permitted to disburse as much as £10,000 in one year, and is obliged at the end of it to swear that whatever has been expended was absolutely necessary for the public service. Here then is the great bribe of patronage ! appointments of the value of nearly £400,000 per annum, distributed every year, and year after year, among the upper

classes of this country, and in which hardly any respectable English family is not directly or indirectly interested ! This is indeed heavy odds thrown into the scale against justice to India ; for it would be shutting my eyes to the light of day to pretend not to see the proofs all round me of the influence of this patronage in recruiting adherents to the present system of Government, and suppressing evidence against its abuses. However, though I will not attempt to deny that to reform the abuses of the present Government, especially of the Court of Directors, would gradually and greatly reduce this patronage, for, as a rule, all the Directors of ripe Indian experience, who have lived in the interior, and known the natives well, and seen the foundations on which our empire rests, all these men are as strongly opposed to the grasping system as I am, and as much convinced of its iniquity and impolicy, and to give them a preponderance in the Court would at once begin to cut down the patronage ; still, I shall endeavour to shew that the abuses which best serve our private interests are directly contrary to the national interest—that “ private suits do putrefy the public good ”—and that the present system is not only ruining and degrading the natives of India, but is bringing our empire into a more critical situation every day. And besides the dangers I shall point out hereafter, there are one or two which I will briefly notice here. The “ free press ” is beginning to do its work in India—the Parsee merchants, the Zemindars, the native heads

of castes, are beginning to feel their power, to combine, and to ask for redress of grievances; some of them are violent, and these do not alarm me; but some are remarkably temperate, and I confess that, knowing the strength of their case, of which I will endeavour to give the reader an idea in the following chapters, I fear the men who begin so temperately, and have reason entirely on their side. So the Americans began, and we all know how it ended. Let not these moderate claims be neglected, when, as I will shew, there is matter enough to swell them into an avalanche. Let not the incipient opposition of the natives be despised because it is feeble now. No doubt we can now accept or reject the opportunity of doing justice to India; but it may be doubted whether, if we reject it, we shall ever have the opportunity again. When Julian marched against Persia, he remarked of the Goths, "*Hostes quærere se meliores;*" in less than fifteen years, says Gibbon, these Goths had overthrown the Roman Empire.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RYOTWAR SYSTEM.

THE reader must not suppose, as we too practical Englishmen are apt to do, that the theory on which men act is of little consequence provided they mean to do their duty. While our neighbours the French, have shewn too little attention to facts in forming theories, we frequently run into the other extreme, and pay too little attention to theory ; which is sometimes as fatal an error. We shall see the importance of acting on a correct theory if we reflect that, crime is the act itself, and not the intention ; and to make the crime consist in the intention is that pestilent heresy of the Jesuits denounced in the "*Lettres Provinciales* ;" and of which I can say from personal observation, that the same doctrines of making the crime consist in the intention are still demoralising large portions of continental society ; utterly confounding their notions of right and wrong ; and leaving them no fixed moral principles. To shew the importance of an error in theory, it has been admitted by one of the historians who sympathised most deeply with the afflictions of his fellow-creatures, that the crusaders who followed Simon de Montfort, were probably not

worse than other men ; only they *had a mistaken idea of their duties* ; and the massacre of the Albigenses was the consequence. I have said this much about the duty of forming correct theories ; because while the conclusions of this and my 6th chapter will be that we have for many years allowed a bureaucratic Government to act on vicious principles of taxation in India, principles which our common sense at once repudiates when we think of applying them to ourselves, and which have caused extreme pain and injury to our native fellow-subjects, it really seems to me a very weak set-off against all the people of India have suffered, to say that our intentions were good.

I have now to shew the consequences to Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, of the Government's adopting a wrong theory with regard to its proprietary right to the land in India ; and to examine whether there is any justification for the assertion of this theory to the present day.

As the true theory has long since been proved and acted upon successfully in the North-west Provinces, and has been entirely confirmed since by our experience of the Punjaub, and our observation of the practice in native states, I shall refer the reader to a valuable and delightful work on " Modern India," by Mr. Campbell, giving a very clear and graphic description of his experience of the working of this theory in the above province .

I will now state the wrong theory of the land-tax, quoting one or two modern authorities for it, and point

out the mischief it has done in Madras and Bombay, reserving a notice of Bengal for another chapter. The first great authority who asserted that the rent of land in India belonged to the Government, was, I am sorry to say, that amiable man Lord Cornwallis. Forty years afterwards Mr. Mill repeated this doctrine to the Commons Committee of 1831, adding that "a country wherein *the whole rent* is paid to the State, is in a most happy condition, seeing that such rent would suffice for all the wants of the Government, and the people would then be untaxed." When pressed upon the means of collecting the Indian land revenue, so that no more than the "rent" should be taken, he admitted that this would be a difficulty for any European collector; with an imperfect knowledge of the natives, their language, and circumstances; with a swarm of ill-paid and corrupt servants; with perhaps 10,000 square miles of country to look after, and 150,000 tenants to settle with individually; but he had no doubt *means would be found of limiting the demand to the rent*, "and then the prosperity of the country will be as fully secured as it can be," (poor country!)—He continued: "if the land-tax were limited *to the rent only*, then the revenue system of India is the best in the world"—finally, "as soon as that point is attained when *the rent of land* will be adequate to all the exigencies of the Government, then all the other taxes may be abolished, and India will be a country *wholly untaxed*." Mr. Mangles, a Director, and also a Director of that New

Zealand Company of which we have heard a good deal lately, reiterated the above doctrine to the Commons' Committee of 1848, assuring them that the claim of the Government in India to that which constitutes "rent," in other parts of the world, was perfectly legitimate, and therefore this was the very best system of taxation in the world, because so far as the rent sufficed, the people were *wholly untaxed*. So another witness, Mr. Sullivan, told this Committee that the land revenue system was "an excellent system and of great advantage to the country, inasmuch as what goes into the pockets of individuals in this country, goes there into the coffers of the State, and the country is *pro tanto exempt from taxation*." Now, as I will shew that the Government never had any more right to touch the "rent" in India, than they have in England, I should like to know how gentlemen in the House of Commons would like it themselves, if a Government, backed by an overwhelming army, undertook to *wholly untax* the people of this country, by simply taking the rent of land? It might be urged, as in the case of the massacre of the Albigenses, that men were no worse perhaps than their contemporaries, if their error was one of mere theory; but when I can shew that the fatal consequences of applying the ryotwar theory were distinctly proved *before* it was definitively adopted by the Indian Government; that, after the long practice of this theory in one Presidency had shewn its dreadful effects in confiscating the capital of the people, it was deli-

berately applied to another Presidency ; that to this day its evils are not redressed, although the true theory has long been established by historians, and adopted with success in some of our own provinces, then I do say that the Bureaucracy have been guilty of a degree of oppression towards the natives of India which would make it a national sin for us to prorogue their irresponsible depotism for another twenty years. However, the theory having once been adopted that the rent of land belonged to the Government, the great bait of the ryotwar system, or annual settlement with individual cultivators, was what was called its "discovery of concealed cultivation ;" and consequent increase of revenue, for, of course, it began with raising the revenue by confiscating the property of the landlords, though as such a system was "cutting open the hen that laid the golden eggs," by destroying the capitalists of the country, the ryotwar system always ended, as a rule, by swamping the whole population in one dead level of pauperism. There was another mistake made by the originators of the ryotwar settlements, which was to assume that all who were designated "ryots" belonged to the same class ; the fact is, that the word in its primitive sense only means subject, and it is applicable alike to a landlord or a tenant—as well to the proprietor of five thousand acres, as to the tenant-at-will of one. In the districts of Madras, where this system was first applied, the Government officers adopted the rates of assessment of preceding native Governments, which were from 45 to 50 per cent of



the gross produce ; but these rates had been paid under the native or village system, and it did not occur to the English collectors that the people *could not possibly have paid such rates*, at least not without being ruined as we ruined them, unless there had been something more than met the eye in the system, which made the real very different from the seeming burthen, and made the *nominal* taxation often more than double its actual amount ! However, under the native system the land was held by a very peculiar tenure, not then understood by the English, which has certainly prevailed all over India, and is at this day in full operation in the native States, as well as in *our* north-west provinces and *our* Punjaub, and in short wherever we have not ignorantly destroyed it. It was this : the whole landed property of the village was divided into a certain number of shares, which might be again subdivided in families, but were always kept distinct for municipal purposes, and the owners of these shares were the only real landed proprietors in the village, the only ones responsible for the Government tax, the rest of the inhabitants being lease-holders, tenants-at-will, &c. under them.

Now, although the introducers of ryotwar settlements were ignorant of the above facts, they ought to have known, that the native Governments which immediately preceded us, that such men as Hyder Ali, had taken all the revenue the people could pay ; short of paying their capital ; therefore, when they found that, after measuring and classing every field, and assessing

the individual cultivators of it at 45 or 50 per cent of the gross produce, it produced a great increase of revenue, they ought to have felt that there must be some mistake in their principles. Instead of this, the great triumph of ryotwar collectors for many years was, to find out what they called "concealed cultivation." Nevertheless, when this system was established, its operation in ruining the cultivators was so rapid, that years before it was definitively adopted by the Home Government, its most famous advocates had discovered its evils, not from theory, but from practice. Colonel Read, its originator, had declared that "it involved the necessity of ousting all between the Government and the cultivator." Colonel Monro had declared that, unless the assessment were reduced from 25 to 33 per cent, the land would go out of cultivation.

Finally, the Madras Board of Revenue had recorded the following strong opinion against ryotwar settlements :—"Ignorant of the true resources of the newly-acquired countries, as of the precise nature of their landed tenures, we find a small band of foreign conquerors no sooner obtaining possession of a vast extent of territory, peopled by various nations differing from each other in language, customs, and habits, than they attempt what would be termed an Herculean task, or rather a visionary project, even in the most civilized countries of Europe, of which every statistical information is possessed, and of which the Government and people are one, viz. to

“ *fix a land-rent*—not on each province, district, or  
“ country, nor on each estate or farm, but on *every*  
“ *separate field* in their dominions. In pursuit of this  
“ supposed improvement, we find them unintentionally  
“ dissolving the ancient tie which united the republic  
“ of each Hindoo village, and, by a kind of agrarian  
“ law, newly assessing and parcelling out the lands  
“ which from time immemorial had belonged to the  
“ village community collectively, not only among the  
“ individual members of the privileged order, but even  
“ among the inferior tenantry ; we observe them igno-  
“ rantly denying, and by their denial abolishing *private*  
“ *property in the land* ; professing to limit their de-  
“ mand on each field, and, in fact, by establishing for  
“ such limit an unattainable maximum, *assessing the*  
“ *ryot at discretion* ; and, like the Mussulman Govern-  
“ ment which preceded them (Hyder Ali), binding the  
“ cultivator by force to the plough ; compelling him  
“ to till land acknowledged to be over assessed ; drag-  
“ ging him back if he absconded ; deferring their  
“ demand upon him until his crop came to maturity ;  
“ then taking from him all that could be obtained,  
“ and leaving to him nothing but his bullocks and  
“ seed-grain ; nay, perhaps, obliged to supply him  
“ even with these, in order to enable him to resume  
“ his melancholy task of toiling for others.”

Such was a literally true description of the practice of this ryotwar theory ; and it was *after* having officially received all the above representations, that, in 1812, the Home Government definitively adopted this

system of assessing "every separate field" in the Madras Presidency "at an unattainable maximum," and settling annually with the individual cultivators. The ruinous effects of such a system may be conceived, and one of them was, that the revenue began at length to decrease till it fell to *considerably below what it was* when Colonel Monro proposed his reductions; and this, I believe, more than anything else at length convinced the Home Government of the absolute necessity of making some change in such a system—and, accordingly, Sir Thomas Monro was allowed to carry out, as Governor of Madras, in 1827, the reductions of from 25 to 33 per cent in the assessment which he had recommended so many years before. I say the reader may conceive what the people of Madras must have suffered during this interval! and he will perhaps remember "the unintermitting concert of praises sung  
" from year to year upon the Indian Government, and  
" the increasing happiness of the Indian people, all  
" the while they were sinking into deeper poverty and  
" wretchedness." As the same mystification goes on at this day, I should think with greater intensity than ever, and it will go on as long as the existing system of Home Government is tolerated, I will now quote some extracts from Mr. Campbell's book, to shew the present operation of the ryotwar system in Madras. "I must therefore describe a ryotwar settlement, or  
" rather absence of settlement, as it exists at Madras.  
" For the distinguishing feature of the ryotwar system  
" is simply that no settlement is concluded at all, but  
" the revenue is made the most of from year to year,

“ without settlement . . . .” “ The assessment is rather fieldwar than ryotwar. The Government deals directly, not only with each ryot, but with each field. Instead of assessing each village it assesses each plot of ground. A field is not, in India, a large piece of land fenced and hedged, but a minute portion, suited to the minute tenantry, divided from the rest by a little gathering together of the earth about six inches high. Fencing is not common, and in a dry flat plain containing thousands of such fields side by side, it may be supposed that boundaries are only permanent when the fields belong to different owners on the spot, with different interests. Moreover instead of assessing at a fixed sum for a series of years, there is fixed on each *field* a maximum rent to be paid for good seasons and good crops ; and it is undertaken, not as an incidental indulgence, but as an essential part of the system,” that this rent shall be annually reduced when necessary. “ To effect then the commutation of the share of grain into money rates, all the land was surveyed according to the native mode of measurement . . . there were no maps.”

No ! and it has been recently stated publicly, by a former member of the Madras Government, that not a single district in the Presidency possesses a scientific or accurate survey ; and in most, either no survey has ever been made, or it was known to have been hastily and carelessly done, and to have been *extensively tampered with afterwards*.

But to return to Mr. Campbell, “ for the manage-

“ment of the village, the headman and accountant are  
“made altogether Government servants, paid by  
“Government;” and “for the prevention of fraud on  
“the part of these functionaries, reliance is placed on  
“*informers*. Fifty per cent of the assessment is  
“allowed as a reward to any informer of concealed  
“cultivation, &c., and it is stated that there are in  
“almost every village dismissed accountants desirous  
“of being re-employed, and unemployed servants who  
“wish to bring themselves to notice, whose services as  
“*informers* can be relied on.” Before the rains the  
native collector makes “a statement preparatory to  
“settlement. But this is by no means *the* settlement.  
“When the crops are nearly ripe, the collector goes  
“out into the district to look at them, and make his  
“annual settlement. The village accountant makes  
“out a statement, shewing the cultivation of each ryot,  
“his crops and circumstances, the number of his cattle,  
“sheep, and children . . . At this time, all who think  
“they should not pay full rent, apply for reduction.  
“All these cases are settled, and *then only* does the  
“collector make up his annual settlement, grant formal  
“leases, and take formal engagements for the crop,  
“which by this time is *past*, and generally *paid for*.  
“The settlement is not made up till *after* the crop is  
“ripe, in fact generally does not reach the collector’s  
“office till *after* most of the money has already got  
“there, and after making all the remissions and re-  
“ductions of the season from the standard assessment.”  
Yet this settlement is appealed to by the Bureaucracy

at home as a proof of the regularity with which the assessment is collected in ryotwar districts!—Mr. Campbell goes on: “that the result of the ryotwar “system in Madras is most unfavourable all parties “seem to admit. The Madras men to whom I have “talked candidly admit that at the present moment “the state of things is most unsatisfactory—that the “people are wretchedly poor, the land of little value— “that the difficulty is to get people to cultivate it on “any terms—and that the cultivation is kept up by “forcing, by Government advances, &c. &c. And; “indeed, no one who has any experience of these mat- “ters can wonder that it should be so. The idea of “the British Government undertaking to perform the “duties of immediate landlord throughout a great “country, discarding all the assistance of the system “which we found, the self-contained communities, and “dealing singly with each wretched cultivator, is, to “one who knows the trouble and difficulty of manag- “ing in this way but two or three villages, quite “absurd. All experience, as well as all reason, is “against it. Any indigo planter who has a village or “two could tell the weary work, the coaxing and bar- “gaining, and the management, the favourable leases “given to some cultivators, the bad debts left by “others, the thousand and one details of managing a “village on this system; and the idea of one man so “managing a couple of thousand villages is perfectly “monstrous. . . . Only imagine one collector dealing “directly with 150,000 tenants, not one of whom has

“ a lease, but each pays *according as he cultivates and*  
 “ *gets a crop, and with reference to his cattle, sheep,*  
 “ *and children, and each of whom gets a reduction if*  
 “ *he can make out a sufficiently good case . . . it is*  
 “ *generally agreed that the abuses of the whole*  
 “ *system, and especially that of remission, is something*  
 “ *frightful; and that the opportunities of extortion,*  
 “ *peculation, chicanery, and intrigue of all kinds are*  
 “ *unbounded; while the reliance of the Madras col-*  
 “ *lector on informers by no means mends the matter.”*  
 This, reader, is the “ *excellent revenue system! of*  
 “ *great advantage to India, inasmuch as what goes into*  
 “ *the pockets of individuals in this country goes there*  
 “ *into the coffers of the State, and the country is pro*  
 “ *tanto exempt from taxation!*” Now from such excel-  
 lent revenue systems, may the Lord deliver us! I have  
 said that the true theory was established at last; but  
 it was not a new theory—correct views had been held  
 by individuals even before Lord Cornwallis’s “Per-  
 petual Settlement,” and had been proclaimed by  
 authority before the adoption of the ryotwar system in  
 Madras. But it was reserved for one eminent man  
 to collect into a focus all the scattered proofs which  
 existed of the real nature of the Indian land-tax, and  
 to establish the true theory on a basis which has never  
 since been shaken, by a book published in 1830. This  
 author, Lieut.-General Briggs, after having been the  
 confidential assistant of Mr. Elphinstone, in all the  
 difficulties of the second Mahratta war, was employed  
 at its close to settle large districts of the Peishwa’s



country, which gave him an unusual insight into the details of native administration; he afterwards enjoyed opportunities of extending and maturing his observations as Resident at various Native Courts, and during a mission to Persia, and he brought to his task not merely the resources of a first-rate Oriental scholar, but the experience of a practised administrator and the caution of a diplomatist. The method pursued in his work was to travel bit by bit, over the whole surface of India, illustrating the true theory by an immense mass of historical testimony, Native and European; which no writer has ever attempted to answer. I have not space to go into the details of this work, but the sum of its proofs was as follows:—1st. That the integrity of private property in land had been recognised in every village in India. 2nd. That Government had no right whatever to the land, but only to a share in its produce, that is to a tax, which did not affect the proprietary rights any more than the land-tax affects our rights in England. 3rd. That the Government share or tax was so *defined and limited* both by Hindoo and Mahomedan law, that Government had no title or precedent (except revolutionary ones) for taxing the people at discretion, and no more right to claim the property of the land and take its “rent,” than a tithe-owner has to claim another man’s estate because it pays him tithe. 4th. That the Native institutions themselves, afforded a broad basis for our administration, and the only one on which we could establish a durable empire. A series of articles by the

same author, adding new proofs of the correctness of the above views, have recently been published in the "*Indian News*" journal, Nos. 227 to 233. The above work produced a strong impression on the mind of one of the most illustrious politicians of that day, Lord Wm. Bentinck, who at length saw, happily for some of the natives, that the land in India was held in exactly the same conditions as those on which a man possesses a house, or a horse, or a dog, or land, or any other property in England, namely, that the Government might assess it to pay a settled tax, and attach to sell it if the tax was not paid; but that this tax was no more "rent" in India than it is in England. The fact is that *tax* and *rent* are two things different in their nature, and acted upon inversely by given circumstances; for instance, *rent*, or the annual premium paid for the use of land, increases per head with the increase of population—*tax*, or the annual contribution to the expenses of the State, as a rule diminishes per head with the increase of population; and in this way the taxes of England have been very much lightened per head in the last half century. But to return to Lord Wm. Bentinck; this enlightened and sincere friend of the natives, when Governor-General of India, took the first opportunity of embodying the recommendations of the above work in a series of regulations, which he sent to General Briggs, then Resident at Nagpore, for correction, and which were the foundation of the North Western Settlements. I must refer the reader to Mr. Campbell's book for the

details, but the principle of these settlements was to ascertain and define first, the extent, nature, and value of the lands, and the rights of their owners, and then, securing the rights of these owners, to settle the tax on a moderate assessment for a term of thirty years, liable to a fixed decennial increase if a certain quantity of fresh land is brought into cultivation, at the same time carefully preserving the native institutions, that is to say *the village system, working through that*, and collecting the tax from the representatives of the different villages. And now, what does the reader think of the Government forcing its Madras system upon Bombay, not only in spite of Mr. Elphinstone's strong opposition, but in spite of his strongly expressed opinion in favour of the village system (for he anticipated long before the conclusions of Lord Wm. Bentinck), and let the reader think of the Government doing this about the time when it was compelled to avow the ruinous consequences of the "excellent revenue system," in Madras! However, such was the case; and although Mr. Elphinstone's great name enabled him to resist ryotwar settlements as long as he was Governor, the doom of the ryots was sealed when he went home, and the "excellent revenue system" was soon after introduced in Bombay. Of course this method of "wholly untaxing" the people by taking their rent, soon reduced them to a state of pauperism in Bombay, as it had done in Madras, and not until they were so reduced, did the Government agree to any reduction in the assessment.

A revision of the assessment is now going on in Bombay, but has only yet gone over the southern portion of the Presidency, and it is stated in the *Friend of India*, of October 21, 1852, that before this revision, "no ryot ever knew one year what he might have to pay the next, and whatever he paid, or whatever exertions he might be induced to make, he still found an unaccountable amount of arrears hanging over his head. There were no rich landholders to stand between him and the Government, no capitalist to bear the first pressure of a bad season, but he just scrambled on from year to year, and took to flight when the grievance became too great to bear. The collection was in fact, based upon the same principle as that which to this day governs taxation in Egypt, viz.: to take from the peasant everything that can be squeezed out of him and then to make a merit of remitting the remainder." With regard to "rich landholders" and "capitalists," I have alluded to the progressive destruction of the native aristocracy in my sixth chapter; and the ruin of the country gentlemen and principal farmers by our over assessment is noticed in Mr. Giberne's evidence before the Commons' Committee of 1848; also in a letter dated 1849, from a gentleman high in the Company's service, quoted by Mr. Bright, in the House of Commons, saying "*many of the best families in the provinces who were rich and well to do when we came into Guzerat, in 1807, have now scarcely clothes to their backs, &c. &c.*" I will conclude this chapter by exposing the stupid fallacy,

worthy of a bureaucratic Government, which assumes that a land-tax is the best of all taxes, and the Indian revenue must depend upon it. In the first place it cannot depend upon it, for it is notorious that the Government cannot tax the land any more, and the Indian finances are now in a state of the most dangerous embarrassment from the insufficiency of the revenue. In the second place, a land tax is not the best of all taxes, not only because Adam Smith and others have shewn that a money tax on land must soon become unequal, but because it is a direct tax on produce, which is always the form of taxation least productive to the Government and most oppressive to the people. To say that it is "best" to raise three-fourths of the revenue by a direct tax on produce in India, while we only raise one-fifth of the revenue by direct taxation in England, is a gross and glaring contradiction. Yet, conceive our adopting the "best" principle and attempting to raise three-fourths of our own revenue by a direct tax on the land? Why, the Customs alone pay above twenty-two millions of our net revenue! so that the system is evidently absurd in our own case, or that of any other civilized nation, which a Bureaucracy calls best in India; though it is really quite as absurd there as anywhere else—and it has led to the cruel over-assessment of the people, and the perpetual grasping of the Government for more direct revenue, by confiscating Native States and the landed properties of the Native aristocracy, without saving the Indian finances after all from falling into a situation of extreme peril.

How different is this result from that obtained by a Native Government which encouraged the commerce of its subjects. General Briggs has shewn that one of the wealthiest Native States, before our time, that of Malabar, had no land-tax at all, and had a very large revenue without one. Yet the Bureaucracy, as I will endeavour to shew in my 6th chapter, have done everything to destroy, and nothing to help the commerce of the natives. I am reminded by the subject of this chapter, of one of the effects which would ensue, if commerce was possible, to the natives of India. It is notorious that they have a passion for wearing gold ornaments, and to such a degree, that these used to be a sort of criterion of their family wealth; and it is stated in a pamphlet by a late member of the Bombay Government, and has been confirmed to me by several old Indians, that under the operation of the "excellent revenue system," which ground them down, till it was reported by a Revenue Commissioner before the late revision of the assessment, that "the straits "to which the cultivators were reduced, were not "merely those of the most coarse and homely fare, "but he believed the far greater proportion could not "afford for themselves one daily plentiful meal, of any "sort of grain, throughout the year:"—under this process, of course, their gold ornaments and every atom of gold has disappeared from among them. Now, the consequence of a considerable reduction of the assessment in the South of Bombay has been to cause a vast increase of cultivation and a glut of pro-

duce, which absolutely rots in the interior for want of a market, and brings back the old difficulty of finding money to meet the assessment. Yet if commerce was possible to these people, and I will endeavour to shew in my 6th chapter that it is impossible, not only could they sell their produce but they would get back all their family treasures, and absorb millions upon millions of the gold which is pouring in from Australia, &c.

However, it is hopeless to ask the Home Government to encourage the commerce of the natives. It is impossible for any man to judge of the unfitness of a Bureaucracy to comprehend the interests or conduct the affairs of a great empire, without having had to deal with the Home Government of India. Burke's description of the statesmanship of a Bureaucracy is not in the least exaggerated: "there is no trade so vile and mechanical as Government in their hands. A large, liberal, and prospective view of the interests of states, passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it, for the wanderings of a disordered imagination. Little-ness in object and in means to them appears soundness and sobriety." It is in vain to ask such a class as this for any enlightened measures of Government. It is in vain to prove to them, year after year, that such a return of part of the taxes in public works, as is the undoubted right of the people who have been "wholly untaxed" by taking their "rent," that this would produce an increase in

the Indian revenues, of which no man could foresee the end—that it would re-establish the finances ; relieve the cultivators ; restore the capital we have exhausted ; and replace the trade we have destroyed. All such appeals, either in private or in the Court of Proprietors, are rejected as a romance, and resented as an intrusion.

“I'll have my bond ; I will not hear thee speak ;

“I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,

“To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield

“To Christian intercessors. Follow not ;

“I'll have no speaking ; I will have my bond.”

So they will indeed ! they are now goading on the Bombay Government to seize the Enams in that Presidency ; they have taken away many of these estates which had been in the same families for centuries ; and as I shew in my 6th chapter, they are in a course of confiscating the territories of Native Princes, whose dynasties date certainly from 2000 years back, and whose ancestors resisted Alexander the Great.

To bring these things home to the reader, let me suggest a parallel case in England, to what we do in India. Our “great Duke,” and our only one, has just passed away from amongst us. I leave his services to the record of history and the praises of posterity ; my business is only with a certain estate given to the Duke and his heirs by the nation, to reward those services. Now I propose to my countrymen, to shew our national gratitude, by pauperising



the present Duke and Duchess of Wellington ; and to shew our honour and good faith by confiscating Strathfieldsaye. Is the reader shocked at such an idea ? but it does not shock our Indian Government in the least. Does the reader think the present Duke's title to his property is something sacred ? but so is a native gentleman's title to his Enam. Does the reader think the confiscation of Strathfieldsaye would be a very meagre addition to our revenue, after all ? but we see in India that a number of estates taken in this way, do something. Can the reader still hesitate ? has he yet another scruple ? will he say that no empire can be durable which is not just ? why then, in God's name, let him help to stop the injustice of our Indian Government !

## CHAPTER V.

### THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

IT was one of the greatest evils of the Ryotwar settlements, that they subverted the indigenous municipal institutions of the country. These institutions had formed the basis of every successive empire in India for ages ; and they were so rooted in the hearts of the people, that when allowed to retain their cherished privilege of local self-government, they were comparatively indifferent to the title, or creed, or nationality of their rulers, and indisposed to political combination, because they enjoyed a simple and satisfactory administration of civil and criminal law. However, the English, who first acquired territory in the most disorganized part of India, and were then entirely ignorant of the systematic structure of native society—the English rashly assumed that an ancient, long-civilized people, possessing the elaborate mechanism of old governments, suited to their manners and domestic circumstances, grown into a second nature by custom, and to this day working admirably under good rulers—that such a people were a race of barbarians who had never known what justice was until we came among them, and that the best thing we could do for

them was to upset all their institutions as fast as we could, and among others their judicial system, and give them instead a copy of our legal models at home. Models, be it remembered, against which we have been inveighing for at least a century and a half, and which have at length become so odious that we have radically changed a great part of them, and may possibly condemn still more. But even if the technical system of English law had worked well at home, it would have been the grossest political empiricism to force it on a people so different from ourselves as every Oriental people are ; and considering that it did not work well, even at home, the reader may conceive the irreparable mischief it has done in India. It is lamentable to contemplate the pictures given us of its demoralization of the natives ; and the more so, because this demoralization is progressive, so that the worst results are found in our oldest possessions. There was some excuse for the Government which introduced this system of "artificial technicalities," in its profound ignorance of every native institution, including those rational methods of dispensing justice peculiar to the country. But nothing can excuse the Government of the present day for maintaining such an abuse ; nothing can even account for such mal-administration, except the fact, that the Home Government is an irresponsible Bureaucracy. What makes this disregard of the rights of the natives (their right to be well governed) more flagrant in the present instance, is the fact that ample information has long since been supplied to the Government of the evils of its own judicial system and the

merits of the native one. Indeed this last has been retained, and is working with complete success in the latest of our territorial acquisitions; for somehow or other we always know how to give the native good government, when we have strong motives for doing so: as in the Punjaub, where it is our interest to conciliate a martial people, newly brought under our sway; and in Mysore, where it is our interest to reconcile them to the prospect of absorption. But, says Mr. Campbell, the Punjaub "having had the benefit of our previous experience, the best systems have been introduced." This is no excuse for the Government, but an aggravation of its injustice. Equity would require that the unfortunate people at whose expense our experience has been gained, should be among the first to benefit by it. For it has cost our old provinces dear, this experience! We have experimented upon their population, as if in *animâ vili*, while we were finding out what were "the best systems;" and now we have found them out, we do not give these unfortunate people the benefit of them. However, I object to the word "introduced" in the above sentence. Mr. Campbell's partiality for the Civil Service leads him to speak of our successful administration of the Punjaub, as if the Civil Service had invented a revenue and judicial system which we have only adopted, and which is some centuries older than our empire in India. Long before we knew anything of India, the fabric of native society had been characterized by some peculiar and excellent institutions, viz., by a municipal organi-

zation, providing a most efficient police for the administration of criminal law, while the civil law was worked by a simple process of arbitration, which either prevented litigation, or else ensured prompt and substantial justice to the litigants. It may be worth while to add some details on the subject of these institutions.

The village was the germ of the whole political system of native States. The constitution of a village was the model of that of a town consisting of more than one parish; and so on, till the village became a city; each branch of the municipality increasing as the community enlarged, until the single smith or carpenter of the village was represented by the guild of his trade in the city; and in every case the freeholders forming a corporation which managed the municipal revenues and police, and was the organ through which the Government transacted its business with the people. As a rule, all over India, there were three classes of ryots or cultivators in every village: 1st, the freeholders or proprietors of the soil; 2nd, a class like copyholders, who rented of the first, but could not sell nor be turned out of their holdings while they performed their engagements; 3rd, a class of tenants-at-will; the mechanics, police, &c., were paid partly by tax-free lands, and partly by a fixed portion of the produce of each field. Of the above, the landlord class alone was responsible to the Government for the taxes, which were assessed on each member of this body by its elective council, and the surplus

rent, after paying Government dues and municipal expenses, was divided among the freeholders, in proportion to their share, large or small, of the property : but there was nothing like "communism" in this division, except the sort of communism we have in many parishes in England, viz., a freeholder's right of pasturage on the village common, where there happened to be such a thing. The two most useful functionaries in this municipality were the head-man and the record-keeper ; both generally hereditary officers, but requiring the confirmation of Government. The head-man was the village magistrate, tax-gatherer, coroner, &c., and had a limited civil and criminal jurisdiction, though in the village council, he was simply "primus inter pares." The record-keeper was quite as important an officer as the first, for nowhere in the world were the records kept with more accuracy and statistical detail than in India. The village books contained a register of every field, with dimensions, names of owners, crops sown, &c., with every particular of the possession or alienation of real property by sale, heritage, or transfer, and as the sale of land was one of the most formal processes in all the native institutions, and every circumstance of the transaction was recorded, it was comparatively easy to ascertain the truth in cases of disputed right. Finally, the village chief and record-keeper were represented by corresponding functionaries at the head of each native district or county, who thus connected the local with the general administration, and were the

organs of communication between the Government and the people. For instance, in the imposition of any new tax, the native Governments always took care to obtain first the assent of the local authorities; stimulating their self-interest on such occasions, and profiting by their influence over the people. Whereas, our Government has sometimes goaded the natives into open resistance, by making them feel that they were neither represented nor consulted in its arbitrary imposition of new taxes. It was the county chiefs spoken of above, whom Lord Cornwallis mistook for great land-owners; though they were really only great tax-gatherers; and to whom he transferred the landed property of their districts by his Perpetual Settlement.

But certain conditions were exacted from these municipalities under the native system in return for the privilege of self-government. Each community was responsible for a due performance of its police duties, under heavy penalties; as were formerly the "Hundreds," in England. They were bound to produce or trace the perpetrators of robberies or outrages committed within their limits, or else to make good the amount lost, or submit to a fine imposed by the Government: and partly owing to this responsibility, partly to the peculiar fitness for their employment of the Aborigines who fulfilled the Police duties, there was no part of the municipal institutions of an Indian village more perfect than its police system. Marvellous stories are related of the sagacity of this native police, who have been known to trace

criminals from one county to another, sometimes for weeks together, until they succeeded in apprehending them, and wherever we have destroyed the native institutions and disorganised this force, a great increase of crime has been the consequence. Bengal is a melancholy case in point; and I must continually direct the reader's attention to the fact that wherever we have upset the native institutions, and put inventions of our own in their place, it has produced a great and progressive increase of crime. But it was in the administration of civil law that the merits of the native system were most conspicuous. The Judges were appointed by the King, and sat as his representatives, and the central courts in the capital, and local courts in the districts, corresponded to the old European model: with this difference, that as there were no set of functionaries in the Native Courts, as attorneys and special pleaders, whose livelihood depended on their practice, the Indian judges had a motive for suppressing litigation, and they maintained a system of arbitration, comparatively inexpensive to the litigants, greatly facilitated by the exact and minute record of real property, and scarcely ever leading to appeals to a higher Court.

It is worth while to add a sketch of the forms in Native Civil Courts; as they are still existing and working to admiration, wherever we have not destroyed the native institutions and introduced our system of "artificial technicalities." After the plaintiff's petition is received by the judge, he must



attend when it is read in court, to answer any interrogatories the judge chooses to put to him. The defendant is then summoned and required to answer in writing, and it is the duty of the judge, at this stage of the proceedings, to endeavour to effect an arrangement or compromise, and obtain from the parties mutual releases; in which case, this first process is final. Failing in this, the judge proposes to them an arbitration of friends, generally accepted when the parties are dealing fairly with one another—and then the forms of a regular trial are enforced by an officer of the court, who has power to compel the attendance of witnesses, the production of papers, &c.; the award is made a rule of Court, and this second process is final too. When one or both parties refuse this method, they are required to give securities, the one to prosecute, the other to defend the case. The Court then summons a number of individuals of the same profession or rank as the parties, out of whom a certain number are selected, any of whom the plaintiff or defendant has a right to challenge; the Court deciding on the validity of objection. The parties are then required to sign an instrument agreeing to submit their cause to this jury, and pay a certain fine to Government if they appeal against the decision (this meaning appeal costs), and after the hearing of the cause, before the decree is passed, they are required to sign an affirmation of the fairness of the proceedings. An officer of the Court attends to regulate the forms, as in the Arbitration Courts, and

in this way several suits may be conducted simultaneously in the same Court. When the decree is given, the judge awards their costs to jurors, witnesses, &c., and decides who is to pay them. In the event of an appeal, the appellant must enter into recognizances to pay the expences, but an appeal beyond the district seems to be unheard of, and this simple mode of dispensing justice, minus English law and attorneys and special pleaders, is to this day completely successful. It is not that lawyers do not exist in Native States, but that the Court alone can summon them, if it requires their advice or assistance; the parties cannot hire them under the native system, as they do under our system, to defeat the ends of justice.

Such then is the native judicial administration as it still exists in many parts of India, and did exist everywhere; and so well did it work, that Mr. Elphinstone can only account for "the flourishing state of the Mahratta country," in spite of the obvious defects in its Government, by attributing it to the judicial part of the native institutions. And now, in lieu of this simple and rational mode of dispensing justice, we have given the natives an obscure, complicated, pedantic system of English law, full of "artificial technicalities," which disable the candidates for justice from any longer pleading their own cause, and force them to have recourse to a swarm of attorneys and special pleaders, that is of *professional rogues*, according to Mr. Campbell, to conduct their cases, by which means we have taught an ingenious people to refine upon the quibbles

and fictions of English lawyers, and become such adepts in the science, that the course of justice, civil as well as criminal, is utterly confounded in a maze of artifice and fraud, and the natives, both high and low, are becoming more and more demoralized, as they become more dexterous in applying all the "sharp practice" of English law.

I had copied a series of extracts from "Modern India" to illustrate all this, but I now find their volume so great, that I cannot possibly insert them; although Mr. Campbell's description is full of graphic details, of which I cannot give the effect in a condensed statement. I must, therefore, recommend the reader to buy the book, as the outline of its revelations, which is all I can find room for, will not give a sufficient idea of the injury which our judicial system is doing to the natives. This author says that some men go out from Haileybury, who are not, and never can be, fit for the duties of the Civil Service; that in the course of promotion, men are changed from one department to another with a totally different set of duties at every step—frequently posted to different parts of the country where they do not understand the language of the people; and that they only hold the same office on an average for two or three years without interruption, which gives little opportunity for acquiring the local knowledge necessary for administrative duties. As the rule, promotion goes by seniority, and so the most indifferent officers attain a certain rank in time, and the higher appointments are

sometimes long blocked up by elderly men, never brilliant and now inefficient, worn out in body, mind, or temper, yet who cannot or will not retire.

When a collector is old enough, he is made a judge—and to this step there is almost no exception if it is wished for. “It seems to be considered, that if at this time of life a man is fit for anything at all, he is fit for a judge; and if he is fit for nothing, better make him a judge and get rid of him; for once in that office, he has no *claim* to farther promotion by mere seniority alone.” Altogether, it happens that few above mediocrity remain to be judges, and of those who do, many are disappointed men; and in both divisions of the Bengal Presidency they are promoted to be judges late in life, with no previous experience whatever of the principal portion of their duties, civil justice.

These judges are nervous, captious, and timid; disposed to overstrain forms and exaggerate technicalities, and to rush into the extreme of legal niceties and quibbles; they are unwilling to convict on reasonable evidence—some, unable to make up their minds, and thinking acquittal the safest course—some, considering themselves charged with the interests of the prisoner as opposed to the magistrate, and seeking for every argument for acquittal, substantial or technical; and finally, they are prone to feel that their consequence depends upon actively interfering with and checking the magistrates, and to give prisoners the benefit of every doubt on their minds, reasonable or unreasonable, rather than face the responsibility of convicting them. “Trans-

“ferred to the superintendence of a large judicial machinery, after having spent the best of their years and energies in other employments, it is hardly to be expected that they would well perform so difficult a task.” Such being the judges, let us see what are the laws.

The criminal law is a patchwork, made up of pieces engrafted at all times and seasons on a groundwork of native codes, nearly covered and obliterated; in fact, by practice and continual emendations, there has grown up a system of our own; and the Sudder Court, composed of the judges described above, are in the habit of issuing authoritative “constructions” of regulations and points of practice: but successive judges pretty often vary their constructions. In the civil law the Government has scarcely interfered at all in the laws regulating property; but precedents and “constructions” have swelled out into a large and complicated legal system, quite undigested and unarranged, and the judges of one day are constantly altering the constructions of their predecessors. Such then being the judges, and such the laws, and the police being inefficient, except in the Punjaub, where “the wholesome ancient system is more exactly adhered to,” let us see how the system works, and first in criminal law? It appears that the magistrate has greater facilities for eliciting the truth than the judge; by questioning the witnesses, whose evidence is all taken down in writing, and ascertaining that they understand what is recorded, and the author

hardly ever knew evidence to be at all perverted where the parties, the magistrate, and the witnesses all spoke and understood the same language. Moreover, in the new territories there is a habit of confessing among the people; though this is exchanged for a habit of denial in the clearest cases when they find out the many judicial chances of escape under our system. Altogether in new territories, an efficient and experienced official can very well get at the truth in most cases; but there is a great deterioration in the course of time, from which the author infers that lying and perjury are quite as much due to our judicial institutions as to the people. It appears that the judge prefers deliberate statements as the best legal evidence; while the magistrate can to some extent ascertain the character and history of the witnesses, and does a good deal towards weighing them properly. But still experienced criminals, and especially the professional attorneys about the Courts do much to baffle him, witnesses are sent up well crammed and cautioned to tell a connected story, and not to tell too much; and when the case after a long interval goes to the judge, the evidence is worth literally nothing. All the witnesses are thoroughly well up in a thrice-told tale. Nothing is to be made of strings of such witnesses directly contradicting one another. The judge can get little more out of them. To him a witness is a witness, and he knows nothing else about him. "The civil courts are the great schools for perjury, and in our older possessions false witnesses for criminal

“trials can easily be procured from thence.” At the trial one of the magistrate’s clerks does the mechanical duties of a prosecutor, and nothing more. The prisoner may produce any number of fresh witnesses he pleases, and has a right to counsel ; although there is none for the prosecution, and “the professional advocates are the most unscrupulous of men.” Finally, though the form of a jury is preserved, the judge generally puts into the box some of the pleaders, and such people about the Court, intimates to them very broadly his opinion, they always agree with him, and there is no more trouble. Under this system there is a great increase of crime ; most marked in our oldest possessions ; and “the Dacoits have now got the better of the laws.” It would be very odd if it were otherwise !

Now let us see what is the system in civil law. When the plaint is lodged, which is generally long, rambling, circumstantial, exceedingly exaggerated, and full of irrelevant matter, a notice is served on the defendant, or stuck up in the village where he is supposed to reside, requiring him to file an answer in a certain number of days. If he does so, the plaintiff is called upon for a replication, the defendant for a rejoinder, and so on, each paper containing all kinds of assertions, accusations, and technical objections, and refusing to admit the plainest facts. This being completed, issue is supposed to be joined, that is to say, the judge has before him a mass of the most prodigious contradictions which unscrupulous subtilty can deliberately prepare in writing, and great quantities of irrelevant

matter, and then he appoints a day for trial. Issues of law and fact are all joined at the same time. In the trial the judge is not permitted himself to make any effort towards the discovery of the truth. Every thing is left entirely to the management of the parties and their professional advisers, who avail themselves of every weapon, fair and unfair. Perjury, forgery, and fraud, are altogether rampant in the civil courts; in fact the whole system is one of highly perfected fencing with such weapons. The parties marshal up their own prepared witnesses, produce their own documents, and apply for reference to particular records. The judge would not on any account refer to the records of his own or the collector's office, except on special application from one of the parties. He scrupulously restricts himself to the *worst* evidence, and having heard that, he decides as he best may. If either party commit any error of form, it is fatal to his cause. If the defendant does not appear in the manner required, the decree goes against him by default, and the first he hears of it is in the seizure of his lands and goods, after which he has no legal remedy. In execution of decrees personal property is distrained, &c. Against the possessor of landed rights the process is exceedingly simple. They are at once sold by auction without reserve to the highest bidder in satisfaction of the decree; or if certain rights are decreed, they are at once made over by precept addressed to the collector, who must implicitly obey, however inequitable he may know the decision to be, and however inconsistent with the rights



of others. Such then is the system of civil law, and the worst of it is, we have succeeded in giving the natives a taste for this system of "artificial technicalities," which thrives amazingly; and as most people are frequently involved in litigation in some shape or other, the whole country is demoralized by it, and the lowest villagers are becoming up to many "dodges" of the law. Finally, our author says, "the judicial oath as it is used, does not in the very least affect the evidence. And yet this is not because the religious sanction of an oath is unknown to the people. On the contrary it *was* nowhere stronger, and this is another of the changes caused by our system. In a new country I found that a solemn oath was astonishingly binding, not gabbled out lightly as an every day matter in the courts of justice, but taken on rare occasions, after the fashion of the people themselves. But such binding oaths do not exist in our older provinces. The judicial oath is much too common-place an affair to carry weight, and the people seeing perjury practised with impunity, become used to it. The longer we possess any province the more common and grave does perjury become."

Such then are our judges, and laws, and administration of what is called civil and criminal justice in India. And the maintenance of this demoralizing system is the more iniquitous that Government is aware of the evil, and conscious of the remedy. That remedy has been applied in the Punjaub, and the reason for adopting it is thus stated by Mr. Campbell. "After a long

“ trial of the working of the old courts, it may be supposed that the Government was little inclined to extend their operation, and the system was so radically vicious that there was no amending it except by altogether sweeping it away and commencing *de novo*.” He then gives the details of the Punjaub administration which the reader will find is the same native system described in the beginning of this chapter. The remedy then, and the only one, is to return to that local self-government, and simple mode of administering justice, indigenous to the country, and congenial to the manners of its inhabitants. A remarkable instance of the success of returning to native principles is given by the historian, Professor Wilson, where he relates how a Bengal magistrate succeeded in putting down gang robbery in the district of Burdwan. He says, “ the instruments employed were the neglected and under-valued institutions of the country, animated by skilful superintendence and encouragement. The landowners and head-men of the villages and of various trades, were called upon to enter into engagements for the performance of those duties, which it was personally explained to them they were expected to fulfil, and the village watchmen were punished for neglect or connivance, and rewarded for courage and good conduct. Attempts to deprive them of their service lands were sedulously resisted, and the villagers were encouraged to give them more liberal subsistence. In this instance it was unequivocally shewn that the

## CHAPTER VI.

### FINANCE AND PUBLIC WORKS.

SOME of the most sagacious of princes, such as Diocletian and Queen Elizabeth, have complained that it was next to impossible for even a wise and good Ruler to find out the truth, when it was the interest of his ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign. Never was this more strikingly exemplified than by the mystification of England with regard to the condition of the natives of India, by the bureaucratic Government to which England commits her authority over them. Never was it more true that, "what flatters the sovereign generally forms the misery of the people;" as we shall see when I examine what those "blessings of the British Rule," which England imagines she confers upon India, really are? The most curious thing is, that although the imposture of the day is invariably exposed afterwards, the exposure never seems to reach the mass of the people of this country, but the next grand deception of the Indian Government is just as successful as any former one. This reminds me of the following remarks of Machiavelli on the Borgia Pope: "So simple are men, and so prone to obey any impulse from without, that who-

“ ever is willing to deceive them will always find those  
“ who are willing to be deceived. Alexander the 6th  
“ never did any thing else than deceive men, nor  
“ thought of any thing else, and none ever asserted  
“ more confidently, or swore to promises better and  
“ kept them less, than he did, nevertheless his decep-  
“ tions always succeeded to a wish, because he under-  
“ stood that part of the business of life thoroughly.”  
And this is the only part of the business of life which  
the Bureaucracy seems to understand ; however, if the  
reader has the patience to go through this chapter, I  
will shew him that unless we entirely and immediately  
change our system, and relieve India from the incubus  
of a bureaucratic Government, our affairs in that coun-  
try cannot be saved from utter ruin : indeed it will be  
no easy matter to save them now ! As the Home  
Authorities always treat the question of public works  
as one of finance, I will take a leaf out of their book,  
and consider the subject in a financial point of view.  
What is it that now renders the state of the Indian  
finances dangerous and unsafe, and far more so than  
they were in 1842, when Sir Robert Peel strongly  
expressed his alarm about them ? It is the steady  
increase of debt ; the almost invariable deficit ; the non-  
increase, the decrease in some instances, of the taxpay-  
ing power of the people ; coupled with the unhealthy  
symptom of an unnatural weakness in this taxpaying  
power, and the confession of the Indian Government  
after it has tried taxes on everything susceptible of an  
impost, that it cannot carry taxation any further. Is

not such a condition of the finances of a great empire enough to alarm any foreseeing statesman? One source of revenue has indeed increased, and just in time to save us from adding several millions more to the debt, but as this source of revenue is one which forms no test of the general ability of the people to pay taxes, although it now contributes about one-eighth of the net receipt of the Indian Exchequer, it adds to the danger of our situation, that this duty on opium is liable to great fluctuations, and might any day be immediately and finally extinguished (one-eighth of the net revenue!) by an act of common sense on the part of the Chinese Government; viz. by its permitting the cultivation of the poppy at home. Surely, when the reader considers the actual embarrassment of the Indian finances, the yearly peril of losing one-eighth of the net revenue, and the confessed inability of the Government to impose more taxes, he must feel how deeply our own interests are involved in placing the finances of India on a sounder footing; for as the case stands, although it would ruin England to lose her empire in India, it is threatening our own finances with ruin to be obliged to keep it. The most startling point to English eyes is the small taxpaying power of the people. A comparison with our own happier land will shew the significance of this fact. In England the people pay on an average £2. per head of population annually in taxes; yet so far from the industry of the country's being crushed by such a burthen, the people never were so prosperous before; in case of war they could evidently

raise a much larger sum for the service of the State, and in peace the yield of the taxes increases with such regularity that a Chancellor of the Exchequer may calculate on a surplus of about two millions sterling every year. In India the people pay only 5s 4d per head, and deducting the opium monopoly and about half a million of tribute from foreign States, the natives literally pay only 4s 5d per head of population annually in taxes; and yet by its own admission the Government cannot raise any larger sum in case of an emergency, and so far from the yield of the Indian taxes regularly increasing and affording a surplus nearly four times as large as that of England, in proportion to the number of the people, the Indian revenue would be actual declining at this moment without an increase of territory which brings a corresponding increase of charges. Is it not clear that there must be something radically wrong, something completely rotten in such a state of things as this? The people are described by Mr. Campbell and others, as being full of industrial energy, and "well fitted to accumulate capital." Why then are they so wretchedly poor? What has become and does now become of their productive capital? For it is evidently stationary at an unnaturally low ebb, if it be not even diminishing. Aye! we must ask it sooner or later, and the longer we delay the greater becomes our own danger, what has become of the productive capital of India? I am sorry to say the question opens a dark page of English history, for it is impossible to investigate this subject

without recognising the effect of foreign mal-administration in draining away the capital of the natives of India. Independent of the illegitimate gains of the last century, of the enormous sums of money abstracted from the country in the good old times, when it was possible for a young Englishman to go out with nothing at all, and return at the age of thirty-four with a fortune of a million sterling (vide the histories of Clive, Paul Benfield, and scores of obscure "Nabobs"), independent of the savings of English officials, who monopolize the most lucrative employments in the State, and go home, of course, when they have realized a fortune—independent of the "resumptions" of landed estates and the gradual extinction of the Native Princes who spend their incomes in the country, to make room for more English officials, in other words, to provide more patronage for the Home Government, independent of all this, there is a regular drain in hard cash every year of about three millions sterling from India, for claims in England designated "the Home Charges."

Now, it has been said by the historian, Professor Wilson, that the transfer of surplus revenue to England is "an exhausting drain upon the resources of the country, the issue of which is replaced by no reflux—it is an extraction of the life-blood from the veins of national industry, which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore;" and some such effects must result from the annual transfer of so large a proportion of the produce of Indian taxes to

England. To bring the case home to our own feelings, let us conceive ourselves to be subjugated and obliged to ship off annually, without one farthing of return, the same proportion of our taxes, which would be more than eight millions sterling, to some foreign country; to see besides, foreigners occupying all the valuable appointments in our public service, and going home with their fortunes, and our great landed estates in a course of gradual "resumption" by the Government; how would our productive capital stand such a drain and such a system as this? Should we not, at least, expect when we remitted our eight millions, to have a good administration in return for our money? We might be sure our foreign masters would keep the peace in the country for their own sakes, but should we not expect them to do something for ours? particularly if they prided themselves on being a very Christian people, much superior in morality to ourselves? Should we not expect then to have an equitable revenue system, and a salutary administration of justice, and above all, considering our heavy tribute, to have our means of production encouraged and assisted? or at the very least, that our foreign rulers would not crush us to the earth by throwing cruel and wanton obstructions in the way of our industry? Well, modest as these expectations may seem, they have all been disappointed by the Government of an English Bureaucracy in India!

I have shewn what sort of revenue and judicial systems have been vouchsafed to the natives, and



will now shew what has been done for their trade. But first, in order to appreciate the obstacles which have mocked the hopes of the natives and doomed their industry and skill and the natural blessings of their soil to the curse of unfruitfulness, it is necessary to understand clearly that trade is the instrument of production. This point is so important, that I must be excused for dwelling upon it a little.

The reason that trade, in other words, commerce, (*commutatio mercium*) or exchange, is the instrument of production, is this: exchange permits that *division of labour* which alone gives value to labour, by enabling different men to obtain articles of utility or luxury, which they perhaps could not produce at all, or could only produce with great difficulty and loss of time—in return for other things which, from their education or genius, or soil or climate, they can produce with ease. Until, therefore, commerce or exchange is introduced into a country, and as long as everybody is obliged to produce and manufacture everything he requires for his own consumption, men remain of necessity in a state of barbarism and extreme poverty, from which they can only emerge in proportion to the division of labour effected by their progress in commerce. And in the state of barbarism or non-exchange, men are inclined to be idle because they can get no reward for being industrious; but when commerce or exchange introduces the division of labour, and gives a value to labour, by offering men what they covet in exchange for their own productions,

then the idleness of the savage is gradually transformed into the industry of civilized man. It has, therefore, been laid down as an axiom that "facility of exchange is the vivifying principle, the very soul of industry."

But, when it is clearly understood that exchange or commerce is the instrument of production, it becomes evident that whatever in any country renders this instrument too expensive to be used, is so far mortal to that country's industry, and that in any country where goods cannot be brought to market without an enormous waste of time and money in carrying them hundreds of miles over "mere tracks," then, in the same degree that the want of roads in such a country deprives the people of the instrument of production, viz. commerce or exchange, to the same extent it must forbid progress; it must ensure poverty; it must stop industry, and prevent the division of labour; it must neutralize God's blessing on the soil, and tend to keep the inhabitants barbarians and paupers. In applying this conclusion to India, I must remind the reader that as trade is the instrument of production, every unnecessary obstacle to the trade of the natives, which the Government has either thrown in their way or else neglected to remove in fulfilment of its acknowledged duty, has been so much positive repression of their means of production, and so much destruction of their capital. Yet I undertake to prove that the Government has inflicted both these injuries on the people of India; it has at one time thrown the

most ruinous obstacles in the way of their trade, and at another time declined to remove obstacles when admitting that it was its duty to do so : nay, incredible as it may appear, it has even prevented others from doing so. And the consequence is, that at this day the trade of India is but a miserable fraction of what it ought to be, and the pauperized natives cannot afford to pay taxes enough to keep the finances in safety, to the danger and discredit of England. As an example of this, it is worth noticing that the total estimated receipts from the land and sea customs of India for 1850-51, are only one million nine hundred odd thousand pounds (including six hundred odd thousand pounds for salt which, since the reduction of duty, is fast underselling and superseding the Government manufacture, and annihilating the revenue from the salt monopoly.) Now, here is a great fact ! the customs of a mighty empire, abounding in noble rivers and fine harbours ; possessing thousands of miles of coast ; and rich in natural products ; in cotton, tobacco, coffee, tea, silk, sugar, sandal-wood, linseed, flax, rice, tallow, wool, nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, indigo, and a vast number of grains and fruits ; and containing a naturally intelligent and industrious population, larger than that of all Europe, once indeed containing hundreds of thousands of merchants, manufacturers, and country gentlemen in the interior of the country, whom we have ruined,—the total customs of such an Empire only yield £1,974,556 ! (And at the same time it is said that England is

paying twenty millions sterling a-year more than necessary for supplies which she could obtain at a cheaper rate from India). I know it is asserted in answer to the above "great fact," that no considerable increase in the customs revenue of India is possible, for the following reasons—that, the native is contented with a little rice for his food, and scanty clothing for his dress, and his *few wants* do not dispose him to profit by the advantages of commerce. I should not answer such drivelling as this, if I had not observed that no mystification is too gross to be imposed on unthinking people with regard to the natives of India; as, however, everything must be answered, I will remark—1stly, That if the native were so easily *contented*, he would be different from all the rest of the human race. 2ndly, That the assertion is contradicted by our experience; for whenever the natives in our employment, or in private occupations, gain more than the mass of the people, they immediately indulge in better food, better clothing, finery of all sorts, equipages, if they can, and vying with one another in ostentatious entertainments, which are rather astonishing in a people of *few wants*; in short, they go on like the rest of the world. 3rdly, I believe that the passions of vanity and sensuality are much more common to men, I say nothing about women, than the passion of avarice, which is always the vice of the smaller number, and the Indians might be reproached for extravagance on high feasts and holidays, but not for avarice. Perhaps I may as well give one example,

out of many, to shew that the *few wants* of the natives are all moonshine.

The scene of the following occurrence, cited by Mr. Chapman, was a district inhabited by the most uncivilized tribe in India. Mr. Fenwick says :—" Our speculations in the country threw in a circulation of about one lac of rupees (£10,000) yearly ; the effect of this on the condition, appearance, and comfort of the Ghonds was remarkable within the first year, and continued to improve. Those who were seen with a piece of cloth scarce covering their nakedness, were hardly to be recognized with decent ' dhatus,' good ' dooputas,' &c. Some even carried this so far as to rival the gayest of the civilized who came there with us. The Zemindars and others were glad to buy, when they could afford it, chintz handkerchiefs, or a piece of red broad-cloth. Penknives, pocket-knives, and scissors, became much in demand. The men led the way, but the women soon began to fancy a ' sarree ' and a ' chowlee ' would not display their charms to less advantage."

From this it appears that among uncivilized people men are vainer than women (how civilization alters us !) and that the natives are ready enough to profit when they can by the advantages of commerce. In fact, India has been famous for her commerce all through history, till the reign of a Bureaucracy, and the traces of former wealth, and even luxury, are visible all over the country. After all, this is an old story that the commerce of India is not susceptible of in-

crease. When it was proposed to throw open the monopoly of the Indian trade in 1813, the organs of the Bureaucracy vehemently asserted, among other pleasant things, to wit, that the destruction of the monopoly would "subvert our Indian Empire," "sacrifice the happiness of the natives," and "imminently endanger the British Constitution!" Besides these cheerful views, they insisted upon it that the experience of two centuries had proved that the Indian trade *could not increase*. Well, the export of the Company was then about one million sterling, and Parliament faced the above terrors so far as to allow private traders to compete with the Company.

In 1832, the export had risen to nearly four millions, and the Company's share of it had dwindled to £149,193! On this Parliament took another step in advance, and suspended the Company's right to trade, when, without visibly "endangering the British Constitution," the export rose rapidly to six millions and a half, about which average it has stopped for the last ten years, shewing that a new limit has been reached, where we are again told that the Indian trade *cannot increase*.

However, having gone so far, I may as well mention what the new limit is, and after explaining it, I shall, although very nervous at the idea of "imminently endangering the British Constitution," I shall venture to propose the removal of an obstacle which prevents the expansion of Indian trade to about eight times its present amount. Mr. Chapman has shewn

it to be a general statistical law that the consumption of our manufactures by the various civilized countries of the world, is in the proportion of our facilities of communication with the localities where those manufactures are consumed. Thus the consumption of our cotton manufactures by the British West Indies is of the value of about 14*s* per head of the population per annum; by Chili 9*s* 3*d*; by Brazil 6*s* 5*d*; by Cuba 6*s* 2*d*; by Peru 5*s* 7*d*; by Central America 10*d*; by India about 9*d*; and by Mexico, a country as roadless as India, and not possessing natural advantages corresponding to the navigable rivers of Bengal, by Mexico 8*d* per head per annum. Moreover, Mr. Chapman has shewn that even of this small average for India, the natives supplied through Bombay only take one-half, because they want the means of communication, which, to some extent, nature has afforded to Bengal and Agra by their rivers.

The unavoidable inference from the above is that our Indian trade is at present limited to the coasts and shores of one or two rivers, in that great Empire, and that we can hardly be said to have a trade with the interior, owing to want of means of transit and of tolerable communications, all over India, and in every one of the Presidencies, not excepting Bengal and Agra, as I will shew by and by. This, then, the want of roads, the want of *cheap carriage*, this is the new limit to the trade of India—this is the only reason why it *cannot increase*, and why a people described by Mr. Campbell as industrious and intelligent, and whose

“native capitalists eagerly embark in all kinds of enterprises,” and why they are “contented with a little rice for their food,” &c. &c. &c.; because it is at present physically impossible for them to avail themselves of commerce for want of means of transit.

I may as well notice here the obligations of the Government with respect to public works in India. I have already observed that common humanity should induce us to encourage and assist the means of production among a people from whom we drain so large a proportion of their capital, and I have shewn how the want of roads in any country tends to keep its inhabitants barbarians and paupers.

I must now remark that in India, where not only the princes but the native aristocracy, who used from religious motives to be most liberal in executing public works, are fast disappearing under the influence of our dominion, in India as in China, it has been the immemorial usage for the State to construct many indispensable public works for the people. In India it is recognized as an historical fact that part of the revenue is received by the Government as trustee for the people, to be disbursed in public works; and not only was this duty inculcated in the institutes of Tamerlane, and discharged by all good Mogul and Hindoo Sovereigns, so that the country is covered with the ruins of works executed by them, but its obligation to fulfil this duty has all along been admitted by the British Government in theory, though not reduced to practice. Nevertheless, one of the



witnesses who most distinctly admitted this obligation before the Committee of 1848, offered some excuses for the neglect of public works by the Government, and I must now shew what they are worth. Mr. Mangles stated, that the means of constructing roads, &c. could not be raised as in England by local taxation; and added on the prompting of Sir James Hogg, that "with reference to the indisposition of the natives to "anything that is new, tolls could not well be levied "on roads and canals as a means of reimbursement." Well, supposing they could not, the Government has always been repaid indirectly for any such work, by the "magical effect," as Mr. Williamson Ramsay called it, of a new road in creating wealth in India. I will give one of the instances cited to the above Committee by General Briggs, of the effect of opening a new ghaut on the Comptah road: "incomplete as "the road was, the traffic of the port of Comptah "during three years had increased from £160,000 to "£400,000, and the customs had also increased from "£4,662 to £18,015, within the same period." But why could not tolls be levied? Mr. Mangles said, "the Indian strenuously resists any effort at new "taxation;" and cited the resistance of Bareilly to a police tax to prove the fact. Now Mr. Mangles ought to have known that the sedition of Bareilly was caused by the brutal tyranny of a low overbearing native, who was placed at the head of the police by the British authorities, and empowered to introduce a law which should supersede the old self-government of the city;

although this ruffian had notoriously been guilty of many acts of oppression and extortion, and was at that very time a public defaulter himself who for four years had set the collector at defiance. And when Mr. Mangles said that similar measures of the Government were "always resisted à l'outrance," he ought to have known that the very same measure which was resisted at Bareilly was adopted without the slightest resistance in Bengal (as in other places), because there the Government conformed to the custom of the country, and introduced the measure through the agency of the natural chiefs and representatives of the people; and it is worth remarking that the effect of this Government measure of substituting its own police for the old local and municipal police, has been the almost utter privation of protection and safety to person, property, or honour, throughout Bengal. It is not the case therefore that Government cannot impose new taxes if it introduces them according to the custom of the country, and allows the people to feel that their representatives have been consulted previously; the only real difficulty is to conceive any tax that would be new in India! for everything has been taxed already, down to shops and implements, down to such things as fishermen's nets, workmen's tools, and barber's utensils! and this odious tax is still levied in Madras. It is no doubt true that public works cannot now be constructed by local taxation in most parts of India, because the Government has drained the people of their capital by its vicious revenue system, and

deprived them of the power of voluntary effort for a while. But if public works were constructed they could be maintained by local taxation; which is now doing and has done a good deal in India. For instance, the Indian press has for some time past noticed the fact of large towns such as Kurrachee, Surat, Mussoorie, Shahjehanpore, several others under the Agra Government, and Lahore, Broach, Belgaum, Poonah, &c., coming forward one after another to avail themselves of enactments permitting them to levy local rates for sanitary and municipal purposes. Again, when Lieut.-General Briggs was administering the province of Candeish, he actually began making roads at a time when the ryots were better off by purely voluntary local contributions; and I have known the same thing done elsewhere. Another gentleman who had succeeded his father as a landowner in India, told the Committee in 1848, with reference to the co-operation of the natives in making roads, "you can do any-  
" thing with them if you only reason with them and  
" shew them you mean it for their benefit, and not for  
" a fresh subject of taxation." He added that local taxation might be resorted to for the maintenance of roads and bridges, and instanced a case where he had made a road and established a ferry, assigning the toll of the ferry to the maintenance of the road; but subsequently the Government had doubled the toll on the ferry, and refused to give anything for the repairs of the road: and he said that in his experience a very large fund raised from the tolls on ferries in Malabar,

was appropriated as surplus revenue (contrary to an express law), and not applied to the making or repairing of roads. The same complaint is made to this day in Madras, and I find a similar statement in the *Friend of India*, for 1852, to the effect that the tolls on the rivers in Bengal, which are, it says, "a heavy burthen on the commerce of the country," and are levied nominally to facilitate the navigation of the rivers, are really assigned to the credit of the State, and form a *bond fide* item of the public revenue. With regard to the natural disposition of the natives to contribute to public works, it is worth noticing that the Indian journals in the different Presidencies regularly publish an annual list of the public works constructed by private individuals among the natives; and one opulent Parsee merchant of Bombay has actually spent in this way, on roads, bridges, tanks, wells, caravanserais, schools, hospitals, religious edifices, &c., the enormous sum of £130,000 sterling. On a former occasion, March, 1850, in noticing the fact that the anxiety of a rich native to build some public work was often frustrated by the want of a small addition to the sum he could devote to it, and in vainly recommending the Government to encourage this spirit by making up the deficiency, *The Friend* quotes the following passage from Colonel Sleeman: "The respectable merchants lay out their accumulated wealth in the formation of those works which shall secure for them from generation to generation, the blessing of the people of the towns in which they have resided and those of the country around."

But to return to Mr. Mangles, I have shewn that this gentleman was under a mistake when he stated that the natives "resist à l'outrance" every attempt to impose a new tax; but when he added that "owing to their indisposition to anything that is new, tolls cannot well be levied," he made a very considerable mistake indeed for an old Secretary of the Board of Revenue and an East India Director. In the first place tolls on the roads, under the name of transit duties, but real *bond fide* tolls, have existed from time immemorial in India, and we have always levied such tolls. In the second place, tolls on the ferries were established by the Ferry Act of 1819, which provided that the surplus profits, after paying the expenses of the ferry, should be applied to the making and repairing of roads, bridges, &c. &c., and I have shewn how the Government violates this law. In the third place, tolls on the public roads, passed by local Acts, have been in operation in the Bombay Presidency for more than a quarter of a century, and the following result of experience will shew whether tolls cannot be looked to as a means of reimbursement. The Government have made in all Western India but one bit of bridged and macadamized road into the interior, 72 miles long, and this is a road made for purely military objects, and leading not to any great mart for commerce, but to the garrison town at Poonah. Nevertheless, one toll on this road which yielded in the first year £400, now yields regularly about £4000 per annum, and on the strength of such a receipt a Company was formed at Bombay for the

purpose of making roads in the interior as a private speculation, if the Government would allow them to levy tolls, whose amount it was to fix itself; which offer, with the characteristic jealousy of a bureaucratic despotism, the Government refused! But the most unaccountable mistake of Mr. Mangles was in asserting that our transit duties were such duties as had always existed in Native States. This renders it necessary for me to re-establish the facts of the case, not merely to prove that the Native transit duties were simply tolls, but to shew that the Government has done all it could to destroy the trade of India, and we are bound to make the natives all the reparation we can for such injuries. The only authority I will refer to is Mr. Trevelyan's Report, mentioned in terms of praise by Mr. Mangles. This report says, that as the transit duties came to us; they were merely tolls on quantities, paid by instalments, according to the distance travelled, just like English turnpike tolls; so light that no one thought of evading them, and requiring no forms or permits, so that every one could come up to the toll-bar without fear; and though different kinds of articles might sometimes be charged at different rates, the utmost the turnpike-man could do was to ask a slight additional toll, and on its payment let them proceed, without search or detention under any circumstances. The Report thus describes what the Government made of these duties; after having in its own phrase "consolidated" them, that is, taken for their standard the

whole amount of tolls levied on goods going the greatest distance (so that a Kensington gardener bringing a few potatoes to London, would have to pay as much as if he took them from Land's End to Edinburgh) Government enacted that the toll was not to be levied at the toll-bar, but only at the Custom-houses. At these Custom-houses, which were comparatively few in number, and frequently a hundred miles off, the tolls were to be paid and permits granted for the transport of goods, when the Collector was at home to sign them; though as this functionary was often away on what he considered much more important business, and the clerks required feeing to hurry them, and there were legions of applicants, permits were not always to be had under several days—(so that the Kensington gardener would have to go and wait a few days at Birmingham for a permit to bring his potatoes to London).—"That such should be the "state of our Customs regulations," says Mr. Trevelyan, "is a remarkable historical fact which "will not easily be credited by the next generation." After the permits were granted, at the rate of 10 per cent for metals, and 5 to 10 per cent for other articles, with 5 per cent extra for what were supposed to be the principal towns, and 15 per cent more on *Indian than English* piece goods, and 10 per cent more on *Indian than English* metals; after the permits were granted, and the goods reached their destination, nothing more was required than to send

to the nearest Custom-house and take out "divided permits" for their distribution. "This," says Mr. Trevelyan, "is a fact worthy of being recorded for the information of posterity. If we were to encourage swamps, or accumulate mountains between the different districts of our country, we could not paralyse their industry so effectually as we are doing by this scheme of finance." However, when once the permits were obtained, the goods were as free as air, and the men at the toll-bars, happily named "Chokeys," had nothing more to do with them than simply to ascertain their exact identity, that they were neither more, nor less, nor other, nor superior in value to, nor packed in a different way from, the goods specified in the permits; to search them if they had a doubt on one of these points; to confiscate them if they could prove any difference; but if they merely thought so, "which they can always do," says the Report, only to detain them till they could or would write to the collector perhaps a hundred miles off, in a roadless country, and get instructions on the subject. "If," says Mr. Trevelyan, "it were desired to depress the productive power of Indian industry to the greatest possible extent, could any scheme be devised for the purpose more effectual than this? Although we have now ocular demonstration of its existence, yet when it has once been abolished, the world will find it difficult to believe that such a system could have been tolerated by us for the better part of a century." Remember that, reader, *for the better part of a century!*



But as these men at the Chokeys evidently had the power to choke the whole trade of the country, what sort of men did the Government provide for the purpose? Wonderful to relate! although they had in fact no salary, for their pay, less than that of many workmen, was entirely swallowed up by the necessary expenses of their office in stationery, &c.; although there never was a service, says the Report, in such a state of utter degradation; although these functionaries were universally hated and despised, they could not accept their places without forfeiting all pretensions to character, and their name was synonymous with that of rogue; yet their post commanded a high saleable price, and a place in the Customs was looked upon as a certain fortune. Forced, according to the Report, to get their living by extortion, their brutal tyranny and insults to women were almost certain of impunity; the merchant would not complain, for he dreaded nothing so much as their simply doing their duty, and acting up to the letter of the law, by which they could at any time stop the trade of the country; and the Native travellers and pilgrims, though loud enough in private complaint, could not afford the time and money necessary to go back to the spot and identify and prosecute a culprit. The consequence was that the trade, the very existence of the people, could only be maintained by an universal system of fraud and smuggling; the rich were obliged to carry on their business in collusion with the chokeymen; the poor were their daily victims; and thus, by the agency

of these scoundrels, supported by the range of patrols, did the Government "convert the whole surface of the country into one chokey," and a monstrous system of universal excise subjected the industrious part of the community to the most cruel penalties.

"The truly barbarous and destructive state of things "above described," says Mr. Trevelyan, "had no "existence under the Native system;" and he reiterates that "it will appear almost incredible in another "age that a system which belongs only to times of "barbarism should have been deliberately established "and obstinately persevered in by us." And while the Reporter insists again and again on the "utterly barbarous" and trade-destroying effects of this system, he is quite as much shocked by its "pernicious effect on the national morals." He says, "this system may be said to be productive of universal crime,"—"it is a great moral pest,"—and he explains how it corrupts the whole body of the people. Here I cannot help exclaiming, shall we for ever be content to listen to "the annual concert of praises, sung from year to year, upon the Indian Government, and the increasing happiness of the Indian people, when they are all the while sinking into deeper poverty and wretchedness?" shall we for ever be satisfied with the solemn plausibilities of *public* despatches and Haileybury addresses, when it invariably turns out afterwards that the natives have been cruelly oppressed? Will the English heart never beat for India, a country that has con-

tributed so largely to our wealth and greatness, and to which a generous people owe so much protection, and kindness, and justice?

To resume: Mr. Mangles took credit to the Government for having abolished the transit duties, "in consequence of Mr. Trevelyan's Report." I find as usual that Mr. Mangles was under a mistake. In the first place, unless such a true friend of the natives as Lord William Bentinck, backed by a high reputation, and a strong political connexion at home, had ventured to call for this Report, the transit duties might have gone on to this day. In the second place, it was not the Report but the public scandal, and the weekly reprobation by the Indian journals of this "curse of the country;" it was, as the *Friend of India* has said, the constant and reiterated remonstrances of the press which at length forced the reluctant Government to repeal these duties. The reader may judge by the dates: the Report was dated January 1st, 1834, and these duties were not abolished for two years afterwards in Bengal, four years afterwards in Bombay, and ten years afterwards in Madras, where there was actually greater oppression than I have described, ten years after such a Report as Mr. Trevelyan's! Moreover, judging from the habitual insensibility of the Bureaucracy to the welfare of the natives, shewn by protracted over-assessments and other things, I believe it was not merely the public scandal in the press which caused the abolition of the transit duties, but the

argument of their assailants, that, owing to the efforts of trade to escape from such trammels, and the multiplication of chokeymen to prevent it, and its destruction of other sources of revenue, the system was ending by entailing a loss of money on the Government. And now is it not shocking to feel the proved impossibility of getting any such grievance as this redressed by Parliament? This is proved by experience to be the present state of the case. The only chance of the natives to get any bad system altered is that the Bureaucracy may themselves think at length that they are losing money by it; but it always requires years to get any change made in the strongest cases: and mean while, until after the change, the public in this country are kept entirely in the dark as to the existence of the grievance, and mystified as usual; and it is hopeless to complain to the House of Commons. In that House, any accusation against the Indian Government, though backed by as much presumptive evidence as is required for any grand jury presentment, is sure to be voted a bore and treated as a calumny. It is sufficient for one or two official men to get up and cite every occasion on which the Government has done right, omitting to mention the long previous pressure from without which forced it to leave off doing wrong; then to admit that there may be some trifles in which the Indian administration is not quite perfect yet, though with regard to the particular grievance complained of, "all the stories "about that are without foundation;" and, with re-

gard to the other trifles, really Government is going ahead as fast as it can, and doing everything to make everybody happy and comfortable ; and on this sort of routine explanation, the few Members who are left, just enough to make a House, these few decide that the official is right and the complainant is wrong, and get rid of the subject with a precipitation which shews that India is the bugbear of Members of Parliament.

I appeal to the debate of June, 1850, for proof of what I say : considering the excessive and all but insuperable difficulty of finding out anything about mal-administration in India, considering that no information can be procured except from such unwilling witnesses as the servants and dependents of Government itself, it was evident, on the occasion I refer to, that where so much was proved, in spite of every difficulty, the accusation could be fully proved if a fair trial were allowed, and yet the House at once refused a fair trial. And what is the consequence ? That as the Bureaucracy feel that no amount of injury to the natives, and no degree of danger to the interests of England will induce Parliament to interfere, "it takes years of private reports, and then years of public notoriety and scandal, to get any grievance redressed in India." Such has been the case in instances of the most cruel over-assessment, of the non-employment of the natives, of the judicial system, the transit duties, and various other things, and so it promises to be in the case of public works.

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I will pause here to mark the progress of my argument. I began by shewing why the natives might expect to have their means of production encouraged and assisted by their foreign rulers, and why, exchange being the instrument of production, they might expect that our Government would do everything to help their trade, and nothing to repress their industry, and prevent the accumulation of their capital when it had to support the annual drain to England. Nevertheless, I undertook to shew that because the Government had thrown some obstacles in the way of their trade, and not done its duty in removing others, the capital of India had been lost, its commerce wasted away, its finances involved, and its people broken in spirit and in fortunes. I have therefore shewn, first, what the Government has done to destroy the commerce of India by transit duties, "deliberately established and obstinately persevered in, for the better part of a century," and only recently and reluctantly abolished; and I will now shew what injuries the Government has inflicted by not making roads, &c.

It may be as well to begin by giving an example, as the illustration, not the measure, of this injury in the history of a particular branch of commerce, because the reader will then understand better what an oppression this bureaucratic Government is to the producers of India, and because there is no question in which it is more necessary to expose the mystifications of the Home authorities than the one of Indian cotton. I will notice in passing the magnitude of our national interest in this

question. Our cotton manufacture now employs one-eighth of the population of the United Kingdom, and contributes one-fourth of the whole national revenue, or more than twelve millions sterling per annum. And such a manufacture is now dangerously limited to one foreign source of supply, and exposed under immense and increasing competition, to the risk of a short crop in the one country of supply, from which cause a loss of eleven millions sterling was suffered by our manufacturers in 1850, besides the curtailing of employment and falling off of consumption on such occasions. Moreover, the monopoly of supply by America not only raises the price, but, from the possibility of war, slave emancipation, &c. exposes us to the risk of a cotton famine in some unlucky year; and, after what I have stated above, the reader may imagine the awful, the possibly fatal, effects of such a catastrophe in England,—and all this while India might, though she could not do it at a moment's notice, send us plenty of cotton, and is only prevented from doing so by mal-administration. Now to put a stop to the trick of doubling back from one exploded argument to another, by which the organs of the Bureaucracy have made the debate endless, I will here recapitulate and answer categorically the different excuses made by the Government advocates for the scanty supply of Indian cotton; at the same time I will cite good authorities to shew what a supply of cotton India might send to this country, and to shew that the sole cause of her not doing so is the neglect of its acknowledged duties by the Government.

The latest excuse turns on freight. It is said that the reason why Indian cotton cannot compete with American, is the greater distance and excess of freight from India. An eminent politician told me, on official authority, that "the fact was, freight had more to do with the question than anything else; and the reduction of a halfpenny a pound or so in the freight would make all the difference." Now admitting, for the sake of argument, that a halfpenny a pound would make all the difference, I should like to know, considering that the freight from India is always less, and often much less than a halfpenny a pound, whether our men-of-war are to be employed in importing the cotton, or what other means we have of reducing the cost of freight to less than nothing? Besides, when politicians believe that the reduction of a halfpenny a pound would make all the difference, what do they think of the fact that the Bombay Cotton Committee, composed of Government officers as well as merchants, estimated the loss arising from the present defective mode of inland transit, caused by the want of roads and bridges, as an addition to the cost of Indian cotton of a penny a pound? Do they not think that if the reduction of a halfpenny a pound *in freight* would make all the difference, the reduction of a penny a pound *in carriage* would have pretty nearly as good an effect? Not that I dislike the idea of reducing the cost of freight to less than nothing, but I cannot recommend it till I know how it can be done; meanwhile, as I do know how the cost of carriage can



be enormously reduced, I confine myself to recommending the construction of roads, bridges, canals, quays, &c. &c.

I have one final difficulty about making a difference of a halfpenny a pound in freight between India and America. There lies before me a report from a large importing house, dated Sept. 27th, 1852, on the average rates of freight on cotton for the preceding twelve months, from India and America, and these rates are as follows :—

Bombay— $\frac{1}{3}\frac{1}{2}$ nds of a penny per lb.

New Orleans— $\frac{1}{3}\frac{1}{2}$ nds of a penny per lb.

I now come to the excuse of “residence.” The Government organs have repeatedly asserted that it was the fault of the merchants themselves that the trade in Indian cotton did not progress satisfactorily, because they would not establish resident agents in the cotton districts. In a book published last year on “the Culture of Cotton in India,” by a Leadenhall-street authority, this step of establishing residents is more than ever recommended as being the *sine quâ non* of success in the Indian cotton trade. Now, I might answer that it is “the nuisance of our civil courts, and “the revenue system we have established,” and the difficulty of making out a title in the present defective state of our laws, which, according to the *Friend of India* for July 29, 1852, most effectually prevent any European from embarking his capital in land. However, let us see what the merchants have said themselves, when thus charged, in fact, with incapacity or

ill-will by the Government for not establishing residents. Their answer has been, that they have tried it on several occasions, and found it did not pay. This ought to be conclusive, for it narrows the debate to a matter of fact, and one would think that to such a fact there could be no reply. Nevertheless, the Government does attempt to answer and disprove this fact, by entering the market itself as a purchaser, and making speculations in cotton, which are proclaimed with great triumph in the book above-mentioned, to persuade the public of this country that it would pay to establish residents, and not only pay, but yield a profit of something like 50 per cent. Now, it may seem very good-natured of the Government to go out of its way and engage in commercial transactions, on purpose to teach the Bombay merchants their business; the more good-natured, because by so doing the Government violates a stringent provision of the law, and incurs a penalty which would be very serious, if it were not understood that its responsibility to Parliament is only a fiction of the law: for the law prohibits any commercial transactions by the Company's Government, on the penalty of forfeiting the charter. However, the good-nature of a Bureaucracy is not a thing to trust to; and there is something which Lord Bacon calls "the turning of the cat in the pan" at the bottom of it, which I must now explain. The reader, then, who admires the pains taken by the Government to teach the Bombay merchants the necessity of establishing residents in the cotton districts, the innocent reader will be surprised

to hear that this necessity was first proclaimed by the merchants themselves, and urged by them in a letter from the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to the Government eleven years ago, which not only explained the importance of this step to the success of the cotton trade, pointing out the great benefits which had resulted from the residence of Europeans in the interior of Ceylon, but clearly described those obstacles to its adoption which it was in the power of Government to remove, which it was its duty to remove, and which nevertheless remain in full force to this day. One of these obstacles was that want of roads, &c., which I shall presently notice. Another arose from Government regulations, framed apparently on purpose to prevent the residence of Europeans in the interior, on the pretence of controlling them. For although it is supposed in England that Europeans may now freely settle everywhere in the interior of India, nothing can be more contrary to the fact; but the real state of the case, as it remains to this day, is explained in the above letter, from which it appears that Europeans can only settle in the cotton districts by permission of the Government, on a short lease, and under the liability of *being any day turned out of the country at once by a Government officer, and having their property confiscated, without any judicial appeal being allowed!* It is on such security as this that men of business are recommended to invest their capital in expensive establishments, which would require the certainty of a long term of possession to offer the prospect of paying.

From the date, then, of this letter, for eleven years at least, the Government has been aware of insurmountable obstacles to the residence of Europeans in the cotton-districts, which it might, at any time, but will not, remove. The Government is also aware that it conveys no real information about the profits or loss of agency, by the assertion that its functionaries, already in the districts, maintained there at charges and risks which are an "unknown quantity," and possessing an influence and other advantages which no mercantile agent could ever enjoy—that these functionaries occasionally make successful speculations in a few hundred bales of cotton. Why, then, does the Government go on boasting of speculations which prove nothing, and inculcating the advantage of establishing residents, as if there were no difficulty in the matter, except that of teaching the merchants their own interest? For this reason—such language is not meant for the merchants who thoroughly despise its hypocrisy, but it is meant for the public of this country; yes, the people of England must be systematically deceived and "mystified," as usual, in order that, instead of seeing in the want of European residents in the interior, another proof of bureaucratic mal-administration, they may actually pity the Government which prevents such residence, for its want of support by the merchants, and blame the merchants who have fruitlessly attempted residence under the existing obstacles, for their incapacity or ill-will—such are the artifices required to defend a bad cause!

A new attempt is now being made by Messrs. Ritchie and Stuart to establish a resident in Candeish, towards the Berar valley, where Mr. Fenwick failed a few years before, for want of means of transport. It remains to be seen whether this attempt will be persevered in as long as Mr. Fenwick's was; meanwhile the successive market reports of Messrs. Ritchie and Stuart will shew the gradual results of their experience.

The first dated July, 1851, asserts that, "*progress* (they print the word in italics), "*progress* is wholly "out of the question until we have improved means of "transport from the interior." The second, dated December, 1851, says, "We have repeatedly before "remarked upon the want of good roads as being the "fatal bar to any material increase of trade in other "parts of the Bombay Presidency (*other* applies to "Scinde), and nowhere else in the world, probably, "would this want of means of transit, to, from, and "within regions of great natural resources be tolerated. "We have but one made road worthy of the name, "that through Candeish to Agra, and even it is in some "parts almost impassable for laden carts, yet from this "road branch off those bullock tracks by which the "bulk of the produce of the fertile valley of Berar finds "its way to Bombay, and our own province of "Candeish yields a gross revenue of nearly a quarter "million sterling, of which so small a pittance is "allowed for outlay on roads, that it has been insuf- "ficient even to keep in repair those fair-weather tracks "which have from time to time been made."

The last report, dated June 25, 1852, says, "Another season has elapsed without anything whatever having been attempted towards the improvement of our means of communication with the interior. No previous season has shewn more palpably how seriously the want of roads impedes the trade of the country. Berar, for instance, has produced this year the finest cotton crop we have seen for many years, if ever; the quality of much of it is superior to the best Broach, and the cultivation of such cotton can be almost indefinitely increased in that province; but to what purpose, so long as it cannot be conveyed to the coast where alone it can be converted into money. A large portion of the crop is still in the districts, and will not reach Bombay until November, and, therefore, much of it, in fact, will not be dispatched until the following crop is being picked, owing to the difficulties of transport over the wretched bullock-tracks, which alone are available for two-thirds to three-fourths of the journey to Bombay. Even the high-road, which serves for the remainder of the distance, is in many parts in a disgraceful state, and in a very interesting report by Captain Wingate, Revenue Survey Commissioner, just printed by the Government, that officer describes it as the frightful and thoroughly execrable road from the Thul Ghaut through the Concan."

I now pass from the excuse of residence, to that of assessment. The Government organs say, firstly, That over-assessment can no more prevent the cultivation of

cotton than that of grain—the ryot will naturally grow what pays him best. Yes, but we know practically that wherever cultivators are reduced to the verge of pauperism, they always prefer to grow the most prolific vegetable food ; potatoes in Ireland ; rice in China ; coarse grain in India ; and the injury done by over-assessment has been to prevent the improvement of cultivation in the whole course and series of production ; not in cotton alone, but in every crop requiring labour and capital.

Secondly, It is said that Government is revising the assessment. Aye, did anybody ever hear of an abuse in India without hearing this sort of excuse for it? They come down from Charter to Charter, the old abuses, ryotwar, judicial, zemindary, public works, &c. &c., and yet Government is always doing something to reform them. The “intelligent clerks” in Cannon-row and Leadenhall-street, continue to be in the act of reforming a notorious abuse, and yet the natives continue to be its victims from one generation to another—such is the rule of a Bureaucracy! It appears now by the following extract from the market report last quoted, that this revision of the assessment is not even commenced this summer in the largest, richest, and most productive portion of the Bombay Presidency, and Mr. Campbell does not scruple to insinuate, p. 374, that the delay is intentional, and arises from the desire to keep the revenue screwed up to its present amount. Here are the words of Messrs. Ritchie and Stuart’s circular : “This Report of Captain

“ Wingate, to which we allude, has reference to a  
“ contemplated survey and re-assessment of the Pro-  
“ vince of Candeish, which is contiguous to Berar.  
“ The vast importance of this measure will be judged  
“ of from the following statistics which we extract  
“ from the Report, and which will probably not be  
“ deemed out of place here, nor fail to be of interest,  
“ as shewing how truly our trade with the interior  
“ may be said to be yet in its infancy. The whole  
“ province of Candeish contains 12,078 square miles,  
“ of which it is intimated that the arable portion is  
“ 9772. Of this *arable* area 1413 square miles are  
“ cultivated, and 8359 are lying waste. The popula-  
“ tion of the whole province was 785,991, according  
“ to a census taken in 1851. The number of villages  
“ in the whole province is 3887, of which 1079 are  
“ now uninhabited. The soil of Candeish is stated to  
“ be superior in fertility to, and yields heavier crops  
“ than that of the Deccan and southern Mahratta  
“ country. Although so much of the country now lies  
“ in waste, the traces of a former industry are to be  
“ seen in the mango and tamarind trees, and the many  
“ ruined wells which are still to be met with in the  
“ neighbourhood of almost every village. Of the five-  
“ sixths of the arable land, the five millions of square  
“ acres now lying waste, Captain Wingate farther re-  
“ marks, nearly the whole is comparatively fertile, and  
“ suitable to the growth of exportable products, such  
“ as cotton, oil-seeds,” &c.

I have two more points to notice before I quit this



subject of assessment. In the ryotwar districts it is usual for the native money-lenders to make advances to the pauperized ryots (at usurious rates which no European could ask), and the necessity of the ryots is thus asserted by the Report of the Cotton Committee of 1848. "They are indebted to the money-lender or "banker of the village, for the means wherewith to "procure the seed, and to carry on even the most im- "perfect cultivation. They give him security for these "loans on the growing crops, which at maturity "they frequently dispose of to him, at prices re- "gulated rather by his will, than by the standard "of an open market. It is asserted that the rate of "interest paid by these unfortunate ryots is often forty "or fifty per cent." Besides these loans, it is customary for the Government to advance a part of the expense of cultivation, and whenever it makes such an advance, it secures repayment, not by exacting an exorbitant interest, but by a summary process of recovery, which works well in practice, and insures it against any serious loss. Under these circumstances, the merchants who wish to promote the cotton cultivation, and can only do so by making advances to the cultivators, have asked the Government to give them the benefit of the summary process as being the only legitimate means, according to its own experience, of avoiding heavy losses; and the Government, which professes such a desire to see residents in the cotton districts, the Government has refused their request.

Again, not only have the poor cultivators had to

suffer from over-assessment, never revised in any district until the population were reduced to pauperism, but up to within a few months they have suffered from the oppressive mode of collecting the land-tax. They were obliged to deposit the cotton-seed when picked, in damp pits, from six to ten feet deep, where it remained without protection, exposed to the night-dews, dust, &c., until the revenue was settled, and then it was taken out of the pit so much deteriorated in colour, strength, and cleanliness, that no process could repair the mischief. This pernicious practice, as the merchants called it, has been persisted in by a Government professing anxiety to promote the Indian cotton-trade, until the very eve of the Charter discussions, shewing that the fear of Parliamentary responsibility is the only motive which can force the Government to do its duty.

The last excuse I have to notice is that Government is now, and has long been, conducting experiments with a view to improve and extend the cotton cultivation of India. On this I must observe that, one experiment the Government has not tried, viz. the one which produced the desired effect in America. For Mr. Chapman has shewn that only thirty years ago American cotton was as dirty and deficient in staple as Indian cotton is now, and that it was the ordinary inducements of free commercial interchange, which stimulated the American cultivator into increasing the supply, and improving the quality of his cotton, to what we see it now; because no Government de-

stroyed his capital by claiming the rent of land, and ruined his commerce by "transit duties." If, therefore, while the Bureaucracy was depriving the ryot of any interest in extending and improving cultivation by rack-renting him, and leaving him roadless, without the means of freely exchanging his produce with foreigners, if at this very time it had really expected to effect supernaturally by "the exotic attempts of a few Government officers," that development of the cotton trade which was effected naturally in a rival country, by the stimulus of free interchange acting on self-interest, then the very insanity of such an expectation would save it from a serious answer. However, it is not the folly but the hypocrisy of the above excuse, which I have to expose, and my answer to it will be very short.

The author of the book on "the culture of cotton in India," although he gives us hundreds of pages about these Government experiments, admits that they "have never had any permanent effect in improving the cotton from India." He also admits that the trade in Indian cotton is a "question of price;" that it is capable of indefinite extension; and that its great evils arise from its not being a regular trade, but a small irregular demand upon the China and home markets for dirty cotton. These facts are admitted by the Government apologist himself; well then, because the Government continues to use means, its experiments, which are certain not to produce the desired effect, and refuses to use means, making roads, bridges,

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ports, and piers, which in *a question of price* are certain to produce the desired effect, therefore I say the Government is doing nothing really to promote the cotton trade, but is continuing its experiments, with the usual object of mystifying the public of this country, to divert attention from the mischief it has done to the cotton trade of India by leaving the ryots without the means of that commerce or exchange which is the instrument of production. And while the necessity of giving the cultivators means of transport has been urged on the Government for the last thirty years without effect, it is worth noticing, with particular reference to the cotton trade, some of the representations made by various parties during the present Charter, and first by the Asiatic Society.

One of the original objects of the Asiatic Society was to discover and develope the vegetable, mineral, and other resources of India; and the Society's "Agricultural Committee" had the advantage at starting of possessing a very active secretary, intent on progress, who procured sundry excellent papers for his Committee, describing the valuable products of the soil and the difficulty of turning them to account for want of roads. At this time, 1837, the Committee published Mr. Ashburner's letter on the carriage of cotton on bullock's backs from Berar: a paper which for powers of graphic description has never been surpassed, and has inspired all succeeding writers and speakers on the subject. At the same period the Committee proclaimed that if the Government would

only make roads, it might expect to see the export of cotton alone, to say nothing of other articles of commerce ; swelling at the rate of 100,000 bales per annum, and probably soon amounting to a million of bales, while the effect on the salt trade was certain to be equally great. Unfortunately, this Agricultural Committee, which was beginning to know so much, and what was a still greater offence, to tell the public so much about India, alarmed the jealousy of a bureaucratic Despotism, which determined to silence it at any price. The first thing was to find or make a good place for the secretary, and stop his mouth ; and accordingly this votary of progress one morning took his colleagues by surprise (of whom one or two never spoke to him afterwards), by announcing his promotion to a government appointment.

After this blow the Agricultural Committee withered away under the frowns of Government, and the Asiatic Society found it expedient to confine itself to the most harmless antiquarian researches for the future. It is hardly necessary to add that as Government did not make the roads, the export of cotton did not swell at the rate of 100,000 bales per annum, as the Committee had anticipated ; but, instead of this, the average export to England and China of the last seven years, as compared with that of the preceding seven years, has only increased 25,620 bales, and the average export from Berar has positively diminished. This result is indeed grievous : this single fact is enough to shew the consequences of neglecting public

works in India. But I cannot help being rather amused to see the quondam secretary of the Agricultural Committee, now translated into the honourable Botanist of the Hon. Company, publish a book on the eve of the Charter discussions, to inform us that "roads *however bad* can form no impediment to cotton cultivation in Western India, because the country is everywhere near rivers or the sea." Why, as it was said by a correspondent of the "Times," this must make the credulous reader shudder to think of the sums of money wasted on roads in this country, considering that we are almost everywhere nearer to rivers or the sea than they are in the country spoken of by Dr. Royle, with the extra advantage of having *our* rivers *navigable*. Yet we have in England and Wales 36 canals and 4000 miles of railway and 20,000 miles of paved streets and turnpike roads, and 95,000 miles of cross roads, against 72 miles of 'real road,' and 400 miles of unstoned and unbridged clay roads, in a much greater extent of Western India! However I think the credulous reader may take courage; I think if we broke up our roads, and obliged our farmers and manufacturers to transport their produce on pack-bullocks over 'mere tracks' only passable a few months in the year, that we should not be better off than we are now; if the public thinks differently, it can easily petition the Legislature to destroy our roads, and place the population of these isles in the advantageous position of the Hindoos!"

And now that I have gone through the stock excuses of the Bureaucracy, under the several heads of freight, residence, assessment, and experiments, I ask whether any of these furnish an answer to the following facts? In the year 1837 a memorial was sent home to Government from the merchants in Bombay, certifying that ruinous and intolerable expenses were entailed on every sort of commerce, specifically including the cotton trade, by the want of roads, bridges, &c. &c. This was backed by a strong appeal from the Governor, then Sir Robert Grant, and it is worth remarking that every eminent Governor of Bombay has tried his utmost to get something done for its communications. From the year 1837 to the present time similar complaints have been reiterated by the merchants, of which I need only remind the reader of two examples, the Trade Reports I have already quoted, and the memorial to the Governor-General in 1850, stating that many valuable articles were often left to perish on the fields, and others enhanced in price 200 per cent owing to the miserably inadequate communications through the country. Again, in the year 1838, the Home Authorities, *i. e.* the President of the Board of Control, and the Company of Directors, distinctly admitted the necessity of making the roads, bridges, ports, and piers, prayed for by a deputation of cotton manufacturers from Manchester, and emphatically promised that they should forthwith be constructed. Finally, in the year 1848 the Cotton Committee of the House of Commons report

that the witnesses, with scarcely an exception, "concur in describing the means of internal communication throughout India, as totally inadequate for the requirements of commerce." The Committee add, "Produce from the interior being frequently transported hundreds of miles on the backs of bullocks, great damage thereby arises to merchandize, and particularly to cotton." Government, therefore, has long been aware that the great obstacle to the cotton trade of Western India, was the want of means of transport, and has long ago promised to remove that obstacle. Now then, I have before me a detailed report of the state of the roads throughout the Bombay Presidency in the year 1851. I shall not repeat the details because a series of letters addressed to "*The Times*" in 1850-51, rather understating than overstating the case, have already made the public familiar with the facts, therefore it will be sufficient for me to state generally the sum of this Report which is as follows :—Except the road to Poonah, of 72 miles in length, still very imperfect in some respects, and constructed before the present Charter, except this, there have not been made up to the present time, twenty miles of stoned and bridged road in any part of the Bombay Presidency ; there are no made roads in Guzerat ; no piers or jetties at the cotton ports ; not one good and complete line of communication with the interior all down the country from north to south ; not one of the clay roads, the fair weather roads, which *do not deserve the name of roads*



according to Colonel Grant of the Bombay engineers, not one of these even which is properly drained and bridged, and is not, as Captain Wingate says, "thoroughly execrable," for a considerable part of its course; and in short the Government has not fulfilled its promises to supply that want of roads, &c., which is to its knowledge the great obstacle to commerce in this Presidency; it has prevented speculators from doing so; it has left the Natives without tolerable means of transport to this day; and the country will require the construction of about a thousand miles of "real road," in Colonel Grant's phrase, before the cotton trade of India can even be said to have had a chance of success.

And now I must remind the reader, that I promised to give this example of the cotton trade as an illustration, not a measure, of the injury inflicted on the natives by neglecting the communications of the country. Perhaps after all the most lamentable instance of the effect of a want of roads is exhibited in the periodical local famines to which the Government leaves the people exposed, and by which as Mr. Chapman says, the agricultural population are so totally ruined and thrown into the hands of the money-lenders that they have, roughly speaking, to begin the world afresh every ten or twelve years. Let the reader imagine one of these cases cited to the Committee of 1848, when grain was selling at 6s. to 8s. a quarter in Candeish, and 64s. to 70s. in Poonah, where the people were dying in the streets of famine,

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without the possibility of getting supplies from Can-deish, because the clay roads are impracticable in the rains: and let the reader remember that the same famine might happen again next year!

“ . . . . . O, we have ta'en  
“ Too little care of this! take physic, pomp;  
“ Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;”

I often hear people talk of the liberality of the Court of Directors; and many instances of this liberality to their servants and friends, and relations, or connexions, have come to my knowledge: a liberality visible in hard cash, and paid for with the ryot's money. But I confess I should like to see some exercise of this liberality to save these poor people from dying of famines. What with over-assessing them, and destroying their aristocracy, merchants, and manufacturers, we have reduced them to a low ebb; and the liberality of the Court of Directors would be well employed in saving them from local famines. Before the passing of the last Charter, the Court of Directors were accused of regularly securing the vote and interest of one or two powerful politicians by their “liberality,” to prepare for the Charter discussion. I know not how far a late Governor-General of India may have been the unconscious object of a manœuvre of this sort, but when I saw a pension of £5000 a year for life so readily granted to him, for having been present at a battle where he was not Commander-

in-Chief, while the destitution of the poor ryots who supply the means of this liberality excites no corresponding sympathy, I fear such a system will end fatally. It reminds me of the prodigality of the French Court, in spite of the distress of the people, before the great revolution in France; and when I hear in society of "the liberality of the Court of Directors," I remember the famous phrase "*la Reine est si bonne!*" What a comment on their liberality are these local famines, to which so many of the former aristocracy of the country fall victims. Conceive one father of a family, who "was rich and well to do when we came into the province, but has now scarcely clothes to his back," with his crying children round him, perhaps, reader, of an age and form so like your own, perishing of a local famine! Conceive the stony gaze on vacancy, the tearless, terrible despair of that man, when he feels that the children must die; and thinks of the government of the stranger that has done this! Conceive his boys suppressing their torments to spare their father's heart, and his witnessing the death-struggle of all the beings he has loved, one after another, before he is starved himself! Would I could believe that Providence holds us guiltless of these things, and that we may allow a Bureaucracy to misgovern India, with impunity! But I cannot think it—I am speaking of no imaginary inhabitants of another planet, but of our native fellow-subjects, to whom we owe so much of our

wealth and greatness, and to whom we owe protection by all our claims to a higher civilization and a purer morality.

Yet Bombay is not the only Presidency where the Government thinks it sufficient to give up a one-hundredth, or some years a two-hundredth part of the revenue to "public works;" an item which includes a variety of civil buildings, and improvements in the immediate neighbourhood of European stations, and of no service whatever to the commerce of the interior. I will now cite the case of Madras, and then of Bengal and Agra, to shew that every part of our old territory is suffering from this criminal neglect of the communications—criminal, because so deeply injurious to the Natives; so great a dereliction of our duty towards them; and so evidently the cause of financial embarrassment in India, and the consequent peril of England. The system pursued with regard to public works in Madras is clearly explained in an article of the *Calcutta Review*, for December, 1851. The writer shews that while a large part of the Madras revenue is derived from irrigated lands, the constant outlay necessary to keep such works of irrigation in repair, was originally provided for under the Native Princes, by a special assessment distinct from the land revenue, called "tank fees." He shews that these repairs being as much an essential condition of receiving the revenue as the ryot's expenses of cultivation, it is no more reasonable to have absorbed this special assessment into the land revenue, and to put down these repairs as expenditure from revenue on public works, than it

would be to put down the ryot's gross produce as revenue, and call his expenses for seed, manure, labour, &c. expenditure out of revenue. He also shews that such works, which are never undertaken except as a pecuniary speculation, certain to return an usurious interest for the money expended of from thirty to fifty per cent; that such works are not to be placed in the same category as public works, like roads and bridges, which benefit the public without being of the same direct advantage to their authors; particularly because such works of irrigation do not diminish but rather increase the necessity for roads, while at the same time they create an abundant capital for their formation. The writer therefore excludes from the table of nine years' expenditure on public works, published by one of the Directors, the expenses of irrigation works, and proves that on all the rest, roads, bridges, ports, piers, ferries, canals, embankments, &c. &c. there has only been expended about the half of one per cent of the revenue annually, during the said term of nine years. He then notices the results of thus starving the most indispensable public works of the Presidency, and I will quote one of his examples in his own words.

“The Cuddapah collectorate is a large district  
“measuring 13,000 square miles, nearly twice the  
“size of the whole of Wales. A large part of the  
“surface of this district is cotton soil, very productive,  
“but the worst of all materials for roads: other parts  
“are wild and mountainous. It does not appear that  
“any considerable outlay has ever been made on the

“ roads of this extensive tract during the last half  
“ century that it has been under British rule, though,  
“ during that period, fully fourteen millions sterling  
“ have been drawn from it in direct revenue. The  
“ consequences may be supposed. Roads cannot be  
“ said to exist; in the cotton soil a little rain makes  
“ the tracks impassable, and everywhere carts, when  
“ used at all, are only able to carry half the load,  
“ and to travel half the distance in a day, that they  
“ could on a made road. Nor is this all: the road  
“ from this extensive district to the Presidency is in  
“ no better state. It is, in short, proverbially bad,  
“ even among Madras roads, and there is one part of  
“ it which is literally used by the Military Board as a  
“ trial ground to test the powers of new gun-carriages,  
“ which are pronounced safe if they pass this severe  
“ ordeal! Cuddapah is a rich and productive tract;  
“ its indigo is celebrated, and it is one of the finest  
“ cotton-fields in South India, but it is needless to say  
“ that its prosperity is dreadfully impeded and kept  
“ down by the disgraceful state of its internal roads,  
“ and of its communication with the natural outlet for  
“ its produce.” The writer adds, that the zealous and  
active are impatient and indignant to see the enterprise  
and industry of the natives repressed by the wretched  
and disgraceful intercommunications of the country;  
but he says that the Madras authorities, from the  
Governor down to the collectors and engineers, are  
most unwilling to propose any improvement to the  
Supreme Government (which is forced to obey orders

from a Bureaucracy at home), because such proposals are always received with disfavour, and almost always refused; and this has since been confirmed by the evidence of Lord Elphinstone, late Governor of Madras, before the Committee of last Session. The writer gives an instance of such a refusal, which shews the spirit of bureaucratic administration. "Colonel Arthur Cotton, that able and zealous engineer officer, was very anxious that the noble means of inland water communication, afforded by the Godavery River, should be no longer neglected; and having satisfied himself by local inquiries that there was reasonable ground for believing that the river might be navigated by steam for nearly 400 miles from the sea, and into the very heart of the valley of Berar, the finest cotton country in India, he applied to the Madras Government for a small grant of money to enable him personally to explore the river in a small steamer, which he had himself constructed for the Gadavery Anicut, and to clear away slight impediments. The Madras Government solicited the sanction of the Indian Government to devote a sum not exceeding £1000 to that very important object, but this application was refused." The object was to open an inland navigation 400 miles in length, and thus to effect a communication between a vast cotton-field and the Manchester manufacturers, and to give the grain-producing districts in the delta of the Godavery access to the vast markets for food which would be created by the extended culture of cotton in Berar. I

have before me a letter from a Madras engineer on this subject, in which he says that "*cheap carriage* is "the grand desideratum for India," and that "the "navigation of the Godavery would open up a vast "field for commercial enterprise, that whole tract "having been almost hermetically sealed hitherto." He adds, that "for Berar cotton to be conveyed 300 "miles by land to Bombay, when it can be brought "down at one-tenth of that expense by the river, to a "safe port on this side, in a few days, is a disgrace to "Englishmen." The letter concludes by saying that "*nothing but the continual pressure of public opinion* "in *England* will ensure anything being effected in "India." I hope this public opinion will not be appealed to in vain!

I will give one more example from the Government Blue Book of 1851, to shew the contrast between the situation of the people in a well-managed native state and that of the inhabitants of one of our Madras districts which suffered the longest from over-assessment. "The roads in this district (of "Bellary) are in a wretched state. Excellent roads, "feasible not only for the common country carts, but "for spring carriages, have been made in many directions throughout the Mysore country, which borders "for a distance of about 200 miles on the south "boundary of Bellary, but there are *no corresponding* "roads to meet them in that district, and consequently "not only the town of Bellary, but the whole district "is cut off from the advantages which are offered by



“an open and easy communication with the Mysore territories.” However, an excuse is given for starving the public works of Madras, which is characteristic of a Bureaucracy, viz., that the Presidency does not pay its expenses. On this plea it has been the constant practice to press retrenchment and economy on this unfortunate Presidency, and to refuse it the means of improvement. On this plea the transit duties were retained, and other most injurious taxes are still retained. On this plea the Madras Collector has an amount of work thrown upon him, from the size of the districts, which it is physically impossible for him to perform, so that he is compelled to neglect parts of it. On this plea no revenue survey is granted to Madras, although in every district of the Presidency either no survey has ever been made, or it is known to have been hastily and carelessly done, and extensively tampered with afterwards; and it is admitted that an accurate survey is the only possible basis of an equitable assessment, particularly with the minute holdings under the Ryotwar system. And after all, the reviewer proves that this excuse of the Presidency’s not paying its expenses is only supported by a juggle in the accounts, by which Madras is charged with the military expenditure for countries whose revenues are paid to Bengal. The same excuse is made for starving the public works of Bombay, and supported in the same way, by “cooking” the accounts, and debiting this Presidency with many heavy expenses, which have nothing on earth to do with it. And it is by such

contemptible tricks as this that the Bureaucracy defend their destructive policy towards the population of these two Presidencies; they begin by destroying the commerce and prosperity of the natives on a false plea of their not paying their expenses, and then point to their pauperized condition as a ground for refusing every improvement that would enable them to pay a higher revenue. This is adding insult to injury. But let us go deeper into this; not only because the excuse of a Presidency's not paying its expenses is the strongest possible admission of the misgovernment of that Presidency, but because this excuse is, in fact, applied to the whole of India; and when the Bureaucracy say they have not money for public works and other reforms in India, they do but say in other words that India does not pay its expenses. I will therefore quote an extract on this point from the letter of a Madras engineer; a letter hastily written, and not meant for publication, but which I like all the better for it. I think the writer's natural expression, coming from the heart, will go to the heart, more than any deliberate statement would do; but the reader shall judge for himself: here is the extract. " Lord \* \* \* " speaks of the Court not having been able to provide " money for public works, while they were struggling " for existence in India, although they could for wars " which they were compelled to carry on at all risks. " But this begs the whole question, which is, were " they, by neglecting the public works, enabled to carry " on their wars, or were they so miserably poor and

“ swamped in their means because they neglected the  
“ public works? They are two very different things,  
“ the carrying on new and extensive improvements,  
“ and the keeping old works in repair. We will first  
“ take up the latter. To say they could not find money  
“ for *them* is nonsense. The works themselves pro-  
“ vided money from year to year, and if the repairs  
“ were not executed the works did not yield their pro-  
“ per returns. Now, Tanjore was the only district in  
“ this Presidency where the works were kept in tho-  
“ rough repair. To give you some idea of the extent  
“ to which this neglect was carried, the large irrigation  
“ works in this district were never cleared out for  
“ thirty or forty years, by which an entire district was  
“ half ruined. My predecessor cleared out one mile  
“ at a cost of 7000 rupees (£700), and the revenue of  
“ the Talook (county) rose immediately from 70,000  
“ rupees to much above a lac (£7000 to £10,000).  
“ Probably 500 rupees a-year (£50) would have kept  
“ the channels clear; and for want of this, 30,000 or  
“ 40,000 rupees a-year were lost (£3000 or £4000).  
“ This has been the state of things. In 1827, I found a  
“ channel that entered two Talooks filled up six feet,  
“ so that when it ought to have had eight feet of water  
“ in it, it had only two. The revenue had fallen from  
“ three or four lacs to one lac: when it was cleared  
“ out, the revenue rose in two or three years about one  
“ and a half lac of rupees. One or two thousand ru-  
“ pees would have kept this clear. Thousands of  
“ works are at this moment out of repair, the repairs

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“ of which would not have cost one year’s increase of  
“ revenue, though they have been neglected so many  
“ years. This has been the state of things : what  
“ nonsense it is to talk of their not being able to find  
“ money. But their own acts answer the question.  
“ All buildings are kept in repair. How could they  
“ find money for this? And how did they find money  
“ for Tanjore? About 40,000 rupees a-year were  
“ spent in keeping up the works. Where did the  
“ money come from? Of course, from the district  
“ itself. If they had not spent the 40,000 rupees,  
“ they would have lost two or three lacs; but farther,  
“ they spent steadily in Tanjore about 40,000 rupees  
“ in improvements, by which, on an average, they just  
“ about obtained a permanent increase of revenue of  
“ 40,000 rupees per annum. Thus no outlay at all  
“ was required for keeping these works in repair, nor  
“ even for a constant course of improvement. *Why*  
“ *should not this have been done in every district?*  
“ The fact is, that the Company were without money  
“ for their wars, because they neglected to keep  
“ in repair the old works upon which the revenue  
“ depended. But they might and ought to have  
“ gone much further than this; for without a very  
“ large expenditure at once, a system of improvement  
“ might have been kept up, as in Tanjore, that would  
“ have steadily yielded from 50 to 100 per cent. To  
“ confound such a proceeding with the outlay of a vast  
“ capital, which, after a few years, will return 5 per  
“ cent, and then say the Company could not spend

“ money for public works, is merely throwing dust  
“ in their own and other people’s eyes. But this  
“ is not the strongest point of the case. They did  
“ not take the least pains to prevent famine. To  
“ say nothing of the death of a quarter of a million  
“ of people in Guntoor, the Public Works Committee,  
“ in their Report, calculate that the loss in money  
“ by the Guntoor famine was 216 lacs, more than two  
“ millions sterling. If they could find money to supply  
“ these losses they could have found a hundredth part  
“ of the sum to prevent them. But now with respect to  
“ works of actual improvement of considerable extent.  
“ These works have much more than paid their own  
“ way ; not a rupee has been taken from the general  
“ treasury, but on the contrary seven lacs paid into it.  
“ A schedule of various new works executed of late  
“ years has just been printed, the average return from  
“ which has been 50 per cent, *counting from the first*  
“ *execution* of the works, though of course in the first  
“ year or two their full effects were not developed, and  
“ this in direct revenue. Of course the indirect re-  
“ venues are increased also ; and the increase of private  
“ property far exceeds that gained by Government.  
“ But just look at this case, the saleable value of land  
“ in Tanjore has increased much more than a million  
“ sterling since the Anicuts were built—the land is  
“ now saleable at about 50 rupees an acre. The land  
“ in this delta has as yet been unsaleable; it is much  
“ richer than that of Tanjore, much better supplied  
“ with water by its river, and has a fine safe port, so

“ that when our works are in full operation, and the  
“ population has filled up, which it will do with great  
“ rapidity, the lands ought to be worth at least 60  
“ rupees an acre, or seven millions sterling for the whole  
“ irrigated tract : this will give you some idea of what  
“ public works are here. Let us take another case,  
“ viz. transit. On the western road from Madras, say  
“ for sixty miles before the roads divide, there is now  
“ a traffic of about 500 tons a day, I believe 180,000  
“ a year, it costs 30,000 rupees a mile, or about 18  
“ lacs a year. This might be carried on a canal for one  
“ lac, here are 17 lacs a year lost in 60 miles of transit,  
“ and *this is going on throughout the Presidency!* Is  
“ it surprising that on such a system of managing the  
“ country, the people are poor, and the Government  
“ poor ; how could it be otherwise ? I am certain that  
“ if 50 lacs a year had been spent in public works here,  
“ there would have been all along an immense addi-  
“ tional increase of revenue, and the country would by  
“ this time have been a complete contrast to what it  
“ now is. Lord \* \* \* thinks it would be better not to  
“ blame the Government ; how can we possibly point  
“ out how improvement can be made without proving  
“ that there has been neglect before ? If such immense  
“ sums can be obtained, there must have been some  
“ stupid, merciless system before.” (Remember that,  
reader ! that phrase is written by one of the most dis-  
tinguished men in India.) “ What inconceivable folly  
“ it is to shut our eyes to facts, and not to take advan-  
“ tage of discovery, because if we do, it would imply

“ that those who went before us committed blunders.  
“ The discovery of gold in California and Sydney  
“ proves strange blindness in those who had been  
“ living so many years in those localities, but that does  
“ not prevent men digging it up now. The mine  
“ which exists in this country will bear competition  
“ with those gold discoveries. An expenditure of thirty  
“ or forty thousand pounds in Tanjore, besides the enormous increase in direct revenue, has added much  
“ more than a million sterling to the property of the  
“ Province. If a man who could earn £30. a year in  
“ other ways, went to the diggings and there obtained  
“ gold to the value of £900. a year, the world would  
“ ring with it—yet it would not equal the profits in  
“ Tanjore; and here they promise very far to exceed  
“ that. Lord \* \* \* wonders at my vehemence about  
“ public works; is he really so humble a man as to  
“ think no better of himself than to suppose he could  
“ stand unmoved in a district where 250,000 people  
“ had perished miserably of famine, through the neglect of our Government, and see it exposed every year  
“ to a similar occurrence?” (Remember that, reader!)  
“ If his Lordship had been living in the midst of the  
“ district at the time, like one of our civilians, and had  
“ had every morning to clear the neighbourhood of his  
“ house of hundreds of dead bodies of poor creatures  
“ who had struggled to get near the European in hopes  
“ that there perhaps they might find food, he would  
“ have realised things beyond what he has seen in his  
“ \*\*\*\*shire park . . . ”

I think the above letter requires no comments of mine, therefore I will now pass on to the Provinces of Bengal and Agra. These Provinces enjoy some real and some apparent advantages which we must reduce to their true value in order to estimate the degree in which the Government has fulfilled its duty towards them. Their first and real advantage is in their navigable rivers, which form a great natural highway to the interior of northern India, and permit the residence of Europeans on the line of the Ganges, &c. because the river navigation affords our indigo planters and sugar manufacturers a means of transit and communication which is not available to residents in Bombay and Madras. Their second advantage is that in the settlement of the North-west Provinces a sum of one per cent on the land revenue was set apart for the improvement of the district roads, independent of the Government expenditure on the trunk lines; and in the perpetual settlement of Bengal, the Zemindars were bound, it was allowed for in their rent, to keep in repair the roads on their respective properties. This advantage in the case of Agra is no doubt real; under the excellent Government of Agra, assisted by Native management and co-operation, this fund and other local funds are turned to the utmost account in improving the means of transit; but in the case of Bengal the advantage is rather apparent than real, because the Government does not enforce the obligation of the Zemindars who neglect their duty. The last apparent advantage of these Provinces is in the fund arising



from the surplus of ferry and river tolls, which is by law destined to the improvement of the local communications. But I have shewn that up to this time the fund in question has been appropriated to the general Treasury in Madras; contrary to the law, and according to the *Friend of India* for July 31, 1851, an accumulation of ferry tolls amounting to eight lacs of rupees was at one swoop so appropriated in Bengal, contrary to the law, and according to the same journal for August 28, 1851, an amount of river tolls has been so appropriated in Bengal, between the years 1824 and 1850, equal to Rs. 37,35,000 (£373,500), contrary to the law; and according to the same journal for April 22, 1852, these river tolls, which are it says "a heavy burthen on the commerce of the country," are still so appropriated, in direct violation of the law—therefore the advantage of the above fund is apparent and not real. But now after enumerating these advantages, I must explain that they do not satisfy the pressing wants of the people. The reader has only to glance at the map of these immense territories to see that the existence of a few navigable rivers does not dispense with the necessity of constructing roads, bridges, &c. &c., all over the country, to give the natives facility of transit for their commerce. I will therefore give some evidence of the extent to which the Government has neglected its duty towards them. Mr. Bird, late Governor of Agra, told the House of Commons' Committee last session, "the observation of travellers through Agra and Bengal, would be,—how very little has been done by the Government

“ of India for the improvement of the country.” This gentleman is called by the author of “ *Modern India*,” a great man, and it is a sufficient eulogy of his service, to say that, in the technical phrase “ he made the North-West Provinces ;” it is therefore important to find him speaking of the little done for the improvement of the country in the style that Shore did twenty years ago. Again, the *Friend of India*, of April 24, 1851, says, “ one of the most serious “ charges brought against the administration of the “ Company in India, has always been the neglect of “ all public works, and the disadvantageous contrast “ which it exhibits, not only to the civilized Govern- “ ments of Europe and America, but also to its less “ enlightened predecessors the Mahommedans. It is “ impossible for any man to travel through the two “ provinces of Bengal and Behar, which have been “ longest in our possession, and which have yielded “ the largest amount of revenue, without a painful “ feeling that the charge is not without foundation. “ The appearance they present after more than ninety “ years of occupancy, is that of *the neglected estate of a spendthrift landlord*. For one good road which “ we have constructed, we have *allowed twenty others to disappear*. We have erected one magnificent “ city, and every other city of note has been allowed “ to go to ruin. With the exception of the trunk “ road, and the public edifices in Calcutta, there is “ nothing throughout these provinces, to shew that “ they have been for nearly a century under the Go-

“vernment of the same people who have rendered  
“their own country a theatre of wonders.” In June,  
1851, speaking of the above trunk road, the *Friend*  
says, “we have but one road in Bengal.” In March  
of the same year, 1851, the *Asiatic and Colonial*  
*Register*, says, “that in Bengal the public officers  
“are obliged to travel in palanquins owing to the im-  
“passable state of the district roads, and the want  
“of bridges, and take twice the time they need do  
“if they could use horses and carriages.” In July,  
1851, the *Friend* says, alluding to a new Toll Act, “But  
“where are the roads in Bengal? we have but  
“two which deserve the name: the grand trunk road  
“to Benares and the road to Juggaureth, which is said  
“to be a good one.” The *Friend* had previously pub-  
lished in April, 1851, a description of the above  
“trunk road,” by an Agra traveller, stating that  
in many places there was no metalling (stone) at all,  
and the carriage had to creep along at the rate of  
about two miles an hour; and there were three miles of  
heavy sand at the Soane, requiring four pairs of bul-  
locks to drag the carriage through; that the ferry  
was equally bad and caused great delay; and that  
most of the metalling was brickdust or inferior stone,  
which made a difference of two or three miles an hour  
in the rate of palanquin bearers, as compared with a  
first-class Agra road. Again, in July, 1852, The  
*Friend* inserts the following paragraph respecting this  
“trunk road.” “The *Delhi Gazette* warns intending  
“travellers against attempting the road between Cal-

“cutta and Benares, at the present season. A passenger by the Transit Company’s carriages was recently thirteen days on the road, and was compelled to walk for nearly sixty miles, as the mud was too deep for the carriage to move. Another gentleman was obliged to return to Benares after having reached the Kurumnassa, having discovered that about six feet of loose earth had been heaped upon the road in order to raise its level. Near Calcutta, the road is in a similar condition.” Are such things possible! Bengal and Behar, with but one good road, and “intending travellers warned” that they will have to walk sixty miles upon it, because carriages stick in the mud!

It is difficult to help smiling at such a climax: yet we must recollect that this system of administration is no laughing matter for the unfortunate natives; it is death to them. However, I have now before me a Report printed last year by order of the House of Commons of the public works executed in India during a period of ten years. The details of these works are only given from Bengal to Agra, (the others would have been a still worse exposure), but these occupy the first 145 pages of the Report. I have given in Appendix A, an abstract of this expenditure in Bengal and Agra, prepared by a careful analysis of the above details, and will now notice its result, prefacing this notice by a few remarks on two of the items, viz. : works of irrigation and embankments. The first, as I have shewn in the case of Madras, literally pay their way as they go, and

always yield an usurious interest, and are therefore not to be placed in the same category as works like roads, bridges, canals, &c. which directly benefit the people, and only indirectly the revenue. Of the second, I must remind the reader that, not only is the Government constrained to keep up those embankments by its own engagements at the time of the Perpetual Settlement, but the Government would lose its revenue if it allowed the country to be inundated, and the expense of maintaining the embankments stands on exactly the same ground as the "tank fees" in Madras; it is just as much an essential condition of receiving the revenue as the ryot's expense of cultivation, and it ought no more to have been absorbed into the revenue, and then called expenditure out of revenue on public works, than the ryot's gross produce ought to be put down as revenue, and his expenses called expenditure out of revenue. It appears then by the abstract in Appendix A, that of the gross revenue or whole amount of taxes levied on the people of Bengal and Agra, the average annual expenditure for ten years, on roads and bridges, has been less than three-quarters of one cent; that is less than £110,219 for two provinces larger than England and France put together, and containing a larger population than that of these two kingdoms, and the expenditure on works of irrigation and embankments during the same period has been much less than a half of one per cent. Now could any thing I said be a stronger proof of the cruel and criminal neglect of the

people than these simple facts from the Government's own Blue Book? Could any thing illustrate more forcibly "the stupid and merciless system" of a Bureaucracy?—"Is it surprising," in the words of the *Madras Engineer*, "that under such a system of managing the country, the people are poor, and the Government poor, how could it be otherwise?" But when we entrust the Government of India to a class of politicians, of whom Burke said most truly, that "a large, liberal, and prospective view of the interests of States passes with them for romance; and the principles that recommend it for the wanderings of a disordered imagination;" is it not to be expected that they should govern exactly as they have done? Is it not natural that such a class should think it the highest art of finance, to do what would be considered absurd in any other civilized country, to raise nearly the whole of the net revenue by direct taxation on produce, and to grasp direct revenue as much as they could, and wherever they could reach it, without an idea beyond this? And of course this drain of direct revenue has fallen upon and ruined every class in their turn—the country gentlemen and farmers have felt it in over-assessment—the merchants and manufacturers, and inland towns felt it in the transit duties. Mr. Trevelyan says that many towns were deserted by the trade and manufactures carried on within their walls, and the inhabitants left as paupers who had previously been industrious workmen; and Shore mentions the failure of between fifty and sixty bankers and wholesale mer-

chants in his experience in one city alone; and this went on throughout the country. At present the only class who can yield any more direct revenue are the Native Princes and the territorial aristocracy, and accordingly the drain is falling upon them, as I shew in my next chapter. Of course this system has pauperized the country, for it would pauperize any country: it is cutting down the tree to get at its fruits. Yet it is still the sole resource of the Bureaucracy. The only hope expressed in the last despatch of raising the surplus revenue of the Punjaub from 18 lacs to 30, is by reducing the expenditure of public works in the Punjaub to the same extent. And so they go on, the only plan for the future is the plan of the past, viz. to drain every thing in and lay nothing out, and this hopeful system has at length brought our Indian finances to the very edge of ruin. It is in vain to tell such a Government as this that the want of public works keeps India poor; that the want of communication deprives the natives of the possibility of commerce or exchange to an incalculable extent; that it forbids progress; it paralyzes industry; it stops the division of labour; it neutralizes God's blessings on the soil; and tends to keep the inhabitants barbarians and paupers. It is in vain to tell them that the elevation of the human species follows the track of every great highway we lead into the interior of India. All this passes with a Bureaucracy for romance: "littleness " in object and in means, to them appears soundness " and sobriety."

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In conclusion, I shall not surprise the reader by saying that I have not the slightest confidence in what the *Friend of India* sneeringly calls, "the new vigour of the Government in sight of the Charter discussions." I believe the "new vigour" exactly corresponds to the new responsibility which called it forth, and will only last as long as the cause which produced it. As soon as the Parliamentary responsibility is again comfortably shelved for another twenty years, the new vigour will disappear with it. But I must discriminate here between works undertaken by the new vigour for the English and for the natives. The Government has recently sanctioned three railways and an electric telegraph. Now I have no doubt the latter will be finished, and that speedily, because, independent of the calculation that the users of it will pay its expenses, every man can understand the immense additional strength which the telegraph will give us in India, and our English interest in the matter is so clear to English politicians, that even a bureaucratic administration would not dare to trifle with it. But it is very different in the case of railways. Unfortunately English politicians do not see our English interest in Indian public works, nor feel the ryot's strong necessity for them. There is nothing therefore to ensure the railways being finished, or the want of other communications being supplied—(for two or three railways will not suffice for the wants of India, any more than it would do for England to have a railway from Liverpool to Birmingham, and another from London to



Southampton, and no roads beside.) It appears that the shareholders in Indian railways take the matter very easily as long as they regularly receive their dividends on the money paid up, and as these dividends come out of the pockets of the ryots, who have no voice in the matter, and literally go for nothing in the decision, if once the Charter is settled, and the present bureaucratic Government safe again for another twenty years, there may be money enough spent in dividends on railways always making and never made, to have paid for good roads all over India. In fact, the system will be pursued with railways which has been pursued with other ways; and I must explain to the reader that the published "sanction" for any work in India, is frequently a pure mystification, and does not in the least mean that the work will be made, unless it suits the Government to spend the money.

The Government has various modes of privately stopping the execution of a work that is publicly "sanctioned." One is to write confidentially to the local authorities that the expenditure is "in the present state of the finances, unadvisable." Another is to require further explanation, and so hang up the work just as many years as the Government pleases, pending interminable references to England—the announcement of a reference to England, says Mr. Campbell, "is often regarded as an indefinite postponement." A third mode is to take care in sanctioning a work, that it shall be impossible to execute it, by keeping the district without engineers. And here

I must digress for a moment to remark that in every Presidency in India, the corps of engineers is utterly inadequate to the exigencies of the country, not merely too few to execute new works, but even to keep in repair the old ones.

The *Friend of India*, of February 6th, 1851, after making exactly the same complaint as Shore did twenty years before, that infantry officers, magistrates, and collectors, were constantly called upon to perform the functions of civil engineers, mentions a case where a wealthy native had subscribed a large sum for rebuilding a bridge, when it fell some years before, and yet, though ample funds were provided for the work, the bridge had not been re-built, and the country had been deprived of the benefit of it, because no engineer could be spared to make it. I repeat, therefore, that the "new vigour" and the public "sanction" of railways, or any other works, gives me no confidence whatever in the Government. I am convinced that the same men, in the same places, will, if they can, pursue the same system in the future as in the past. I have seen that the promises which necessity forces the Indian Government to make, necessity alone will force it to keep.

As I have explained in my 2nd and 7th chapters the remedies which I propose for these grievances, I will not go over the same ground here, except to notice one point. I may be asked, what, if the Bureaucracy is cut down, and power, and responsibility given to the local authorities, what is to ensure their

competency to direct the local administration? for instance, such a Presidency might be named where the only business the Governor is fit for, is to travel about and take care of his health; while his Council are men who have risen by seniority alone, and are remarkable, not for ability, but for the want of it; and supposing 5 per cent of the land revenues were allotted to public works in this Presidency, what is to ensure the money being well laid out? I answer that if the worst comes to the worst, the Local Authorities are always more competent than the Home Authorities, but there is never any reason for having an incompetent local administration, except the private interest of the Bureaucracy. It is always easy enough to make the local Government efficient if there is the will to do it. It is perfectly easy to break through the rule of seniority for the higher appointments, as recommended in Mr. Willoughby's evidence. The only difficulty is that it is not the interest of the "intelligent clerks" to do this, for the more inefficient a local Government can be made, the greater is the power of the Bureaucracy at home. And it is because I have invariably found, in studying the details of local administration, that all the reforms required in India would be a necessary consequence of the reform at Home, that I have struck at the root of the evil, and devoted this book to advocating a change in the Bureaucratic system at Home. Meanwhile, as the case now stands, the Indian Government are imposing a heavy tribute on the ryots, and refusing them the

public works which would enable them to bear the burthen—they are forcing them to make bricks without straw. And so completely does the system of secrecy and the system of mystification keep the English public ignorant of and indifferent to these things, that India might as well contain nothing but cattle besides our functionaries there, for all that its population is talked of or thought of by the majority of my countrymen. Even in the reports of the dinners given by the East India Company to officials going to or returning from the country, the reader will be surprised and perhaps shocked, to find that amid the chorus of praises bestowed on the East India services, and the mutual compliments of Directors and Members of Parliament on the great success of Indian administration, and the great men formed by it, amid all the self-laudation and congratulation, scarcely a word, and sometimes not a word, is said about the natives. And thus it is that every Indian grievance is “out of sight out of mind,” and the compliments go on in England, and the complaints in India, from generation to generation.

I have often wondered how it is that those who are so conspicuously active among us in the interests of religion, never turn their attention to India. How is it they never inquire whether, as a nation, we are doing our duty to India? and whether their zeal could not obtain for its vast population that legislative justice which would confer the most solid blessings on a one-eighth part of the whole human family? It seems to me that Christian charity would not be unworthily

employed in such a work as this. However, I know not if my feeble voice can reach my countrymen, but if it can, I tell them plainly that the Bureaucratic Government to which they have entrusted the irresponsible despotism of India, has not secured the happiness of the natives in their person, honour, property, or moral sentiments. It has not acted on what ought to be the principle of every Government, viz., to serve the people, and root the sovereign in their interests and affections. Instead of this, it has acted on a system of distrust, and exclusion, and exhaustion, like that of a bad tenant who feels that his lease will soon expire, and scourges the land to get all he can off his farm before he is forced to quit. And at length the consequence of a policy which has hitherto only been fatal to the millions of our fellow-subjects in India are coming home to our own door. The public have no idea of the imminence of the danger. It has always been officially asserted that peace would soon return, and the finances would suffice for a time of peace, though they could not defray the charges of war. Even had this last assertion been true, those who are acquainted with the private motives which influence our policy on this subject, and acquainted with the tone of the public press on both sides of India, these know that too many of the servants of the state have an interest in going to war, for this promissory note of peace drawn by an irresponsible Government to be any solid security for the future. And at this very time, although the public have been most unjustifiably kept

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without official information of the causes of the present Burmese war, which will add its quota of millions to the debt of India, my private intelligence leaves me not a shadow of doubt that there was no more necessity for our going to war with the Burmese than for our going to war annually with the Americans. But while it is not true, that the finances would suffice for a period of peace without an illicit revenue which is in the nature of a gambling speculation, I refer the reader to a statement given at Appendix B of this book shewing that the permanent sources of Indian revenue, which are at present unequal to the charge of the debt, exhibit no increase corresponding to the progress of the debt, but in the case of the customs duties, a decline in the tax-paying power of the people; while on the other hand the regular increase of the debt under the present system of Government is inevitable, and it has only been met hitherto by a gambling resource. In fact, we are staking the credit and apparently the existence of our Indian empire on such a precarious source of revenue as opium-smuggling. And yet according to the last *Friend of India* (Nov. 25th 1852) the Chinese cabinet must soon *be forced by the necessity of circumstances* to change their policy of prohibiting the use of this drug, which, according to the same authority, will annihilate a financial resource amounting to one-fifth of the gross revenues of the British empire in India! Now I cannot tell how this financial prospect will affect others, for there are those who will not believe in the reality

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of an earthquake until they are buried under its ruins, but I feel bound to say what it signifies to me as plain as figures can speak. It signifies that we are going on, the blind leading the blind, to a hideous gulf of bankruptcy in India. It means that we are allowing a Bureaucracy to steer the vessel of State to certain shipwreck. And when I think of "the creatures of the desk and the creatures of favour" who are doing this—when I remember what Burke says of them\*—I begin to fear lest the old proverb should come true in India, that "Providence raises up great men to found an empire, but employs the lowest of our species to destroy one."

\* "The tribe of vulgar politicians are the lowest of our species."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

IT is a common saying, and has grown into an article of popular faith, that, "after all, India is much better governed than the colonies,"—and I have heard so much from my youth upward of mal-administration in the colonies, that I had always taken the above proposition for granted, and supposed it to be a truism which admitted of no dispute. When however, after investigating the details of Indian administration, the old saying again accidentally strikes my ear, I am suddenly astonished to find so little foundation for it that I am puzzled to conceive how such a mistake could have arisen. After pondering over this phenomenon, I believe the real explanation of it to be that every grievance of the colonies finds loud and eloquent utterance in England, and even within the walls of Parliament, whereas the grievances of India have no voice among us ; and the absence of complaint from the latter country is taken to signify the absence of grounds for complaint. This is a sufficiently curious illusion, for if the degree of complaint were evidence of the degree of mal-administration, then England would be about the worst governed country in the



world, and incomparably worse governed than the Papal States; for no complaints are audible from the Roman territory, whatever men are suffering there: the smoke of the sacrifice rises dumbly. But because there is in England, in one year, a thousand times more complaint of the Government than is heard from India during the lapse of a twenty years' Charter, let not the reader too hastily conclude that men do not suffer in India. It is a great mistake, said Sismondi, in speaking of the modern history of Italy, it is a great mistake to suppose that the times about which history is silent are the least calamitous to mankind. All calamities are not historical; they require a certain dignity, a certain evident connexion with politics and individuals, in which all the world can see the chain of causes and effects, before they attract sufficient notice to be recorded in history. But calamities may afflict a nation, not the less real because from their social nature silent, by which a whole people may feel themselves, as men more than as citizens, degraded, demoralized, disgraced in their own eyes, ruined in their fortunes, and deprived of hope so long as to lose the power of voluntary effort, and all this without the connexion between politics and their condition being evident to the world, or any dramatic effect of public interest attracting notice to their inward bleeding wounds.

I shall endeavour to shew the reader that this has been the case in India, notwithstanding the absence of complaint, but I look in vain for anything

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like this in the colonies. The Crown has never inflicted on the colonies such a ryotwar system, or perpetual settlement, or judicial system, or such transit duties, as we have forced upon India, and there are perhaps worse calamities behind. I do not mean to deny that grievances exist in the colonies, only they are not equal to those of India, and they receive a very different degree of attention in England. For instance, I will take the greatest colonial complaint of the day, the transportation of convicts. No doubt this evil is real enough, but I must observe that it is a thing of yesterday compared to many Indian griefs, and that the system of transportation has in its time been of essential service to the colonies, and even now it appears, by the *Globe* of November the 2nd, that a portion of the colonists petition for its continuance, as the only mode of supplying the labour market; at any rate the system is old, and the opposition to it comparatively new, and yet from the time that the colonists declare strongly against it they find men of first-rate abilities to urge their complaint, the press, no part of which is gagged as in the case of India, by the threat of withdrawing the large income yielded by the Leadenhall Street advertisements, the press warmly espouses their cause, and every unprejudiced man would admit that their representative in the House of Commons, Sir William Molesworth, is listened to with the utmost respect by the House and the country—that he is virtually a much higher authority on the subject than any official man—and that from the date of his speech

on the 21st of May, 1852, the system of transportation was certainly doomed, and the only question was, how much more odium and disgrace the Colonial Office would incur in a hopeless resistance to its inevitable abandonment. How different is the case of the natives of India ! Out of the House the public appears to be indifferent to their fate ; and in the House the great authority on the subject is sure to be some official man who may be said to hold a general retainer to oppose the interest of the natives on every occasion, because his own position and influence depend on his maintaining that vicious system of Indian administration which requires his "sharp practice" to defend it, whereas a good system would employ an advocate of a higher character. I may be referred to the efforts of Mr. Bright in 1848 and 1850, and of Lord Jocelyn in 1851, to shew that the natives are not altogether abandoned in the House of Commons. I must answer that the Ministry would have refused Mr. Bright his Committee in 1848, but for the powerful interference of Sir Robert Peel. Alas for India ! that great man was beginning to feel an unusual interest in Indian affairs at the time of his death, and, had his life been spared, the prospects of the natives would have been very different from what they are now. However, in 1850, Mr. Bright was cheaply defeated by an official denial of several notorious facts ; and if Lord Jocelyn fared better last Session, it was because a mass of new evidence, backed by official reports of which the substance had transpired, and by the public conviction

and degradation of Ali Moorad, had rendered it impossible for the Home Government any longer to burke the case, as they did burke it for years in the Court of Proprietors.—Vide Appendix C. I repeat therefore that, in spite of the isolated, though generous efforts of Mr. Bright and Lord Jocelyn, there is no regular advocate for the natives in the House of Commons, as there is and always has been for the colonists; but the only permanent representative of India in that House, is some official advocate against the natives. There is, then, almost no complaint; but does this prove there are no grievances? I will endeavour to answer this question. The more I study the subject the more I feel a growing conviction that the natives were happier, not merely under their good princes, but happier under the average of their native sovereigns, than they have been under an English Bureaucracy. In discussing this point, we have always hitherto had the advantage of being the judges in our own cause; therefore, because we first acquired power in India during a revolutionary period, we have assumed that the normal condition of Indian Governments was a chronic state of revolution; and we have assumed that the mass of the people must have been miserable, because we can prove that many of their native sovereigns were warlike, bigoted, &c. But we must recollect that India is as large as the whole of Europe; and suppose we were to apply the same ingenious process of crimination to Europe

that we do to India,\* -- suppose we were to reckon up the wars and acts of oppression of European princes, as we do for the native princes, down to the end of the 18th century, and calculate the amount of bloodshed and human misery caused by their ambition and selfish indifference to the fate of the masses,—suppose we were to rake out of a few centuries of history, for Europe as we do for India, all the deliberate cruelties inflicted on mankind by religious fanaticism,—finally, suppose we were to see what the memoir-writers of the time say of the condition of the great bulk of the people in Europe, down to the period of the French Revolution? If we were to do this with any good faith, we should begin to find it impossible to cast the first stone at India. We should begin to admit that, if there had been wars, if there had been bigotry, if there had been misgovernment in India, there had been such things elsewhere. But there had been many compensations in India; there had been long-established Governments, and great masses of contented subjects; the Mahommedan conquerors of India had settled in the country, and identified themselves with the interests and sympathies of its inhabitants; they had, as the rule, respected the customs, and religion, and private landed property of the people, and any infraction of the rule was condemned by their own historians as it would be by Europeans; they had preserved the municipal insti-

\* Vide Gulliver's defence of "his dear country" to the king of the Brobdingnags.

tutions, and arbitration system, and excellent police, which gave the people the best security for person and property at the least cost; they never burthened the country with a *national debt*, and had spent great sums out of the taxes for the people, on public works and grants for education, and had not attempted to destroy that native aristocracy, whose capital was the support of the labourers, manufacturers, and merchants of India : finally, they had not treated the people as an inferior race of beings ; they had maintained a free social intercourse with them ; they had not confined them to such low ill-paid offices as they could not fill themselves ; they had frequently left the most important share of the civil offices of State in their hands, and had allowed them to rise daily from among the lower orders to all ranks of civil and military employment, which “ kept up the spirit of the people,” said Mr. Elphinstone. In short, the Mahommedans did not, by dividing the community into two distinct bodies of privileged foreigners and native serfs, systematically degrade a whole people. In a long course of time, and among a hundred millions of men, they had oppressed many ; but they had left hope to all ; they had thrown open to all their subjects the prizes of honest ambition, and allowed every man of talent, industry and courage to aspire to titles of honour or political power, or high military commands, with corresponding grants of land.

Very different from this has been the government of the English conquerors of India. We have kept the peace in the country for our own sakes, and this has

of course, to a certain extent, increased cultivation and commerce, because the instinctive efforts of men to better their condition will always ensure the material progress of any people, until they reach the point where misgovernment sets a limit to progress. But this benefit of keeping the peace in India is the only one our rule has conferred on the natives, to make up for the loss of all the compensations mentioned above; and if I shew this to be the case—if against one benefit is to be set our systematic impoverishment and degradation of a whole people, what will after ages say of our passion for aggrandisement in India? Will it be sufficient to have changed the mode of extortion, to have substituted the dry-rot of English Bureaucracy for the violence of Roman proconsuls, to prevent posterity from condemning with one voice our selfish policy in India? I deeply feel that it will not: I feel painfully that, although for a while the system may deceive or corrupt contemporary opinion, and triumph over such feeble protests as mine, its triumph will one day be appealed against in a higher court of opinion, and be reversed by the judgment of history; and in that day the verdict of the whole civilised world will be given against England, and the curse of many nations will fall upon her, for her selfish treatment of India.

However, the passion for aggrandisement above-mentioned is both excused and denied. It is excused on the ground that our territorial extension in India cannot be helped; that it is “in the natural course of things.” Why, of course it is, so long as we take

every precaution in constituting the Home Government to ensure its grasping tendency. We now make a Home Government which must theoretically know and care little about the natives, and covet any immediate increase of revenue and patronage. But suppose we made the Home Government on a totally different theory; suppose its very constitution ensured its knowing and caring a good deal about the natives, and proportionably less for patronage, and caring more for the ultimate than immediate increase of revenue, more for its real than its apparent value; if we did this, it would then be as much "in the natural course of things" for the Government not to be grasping, as it now is for it to be so.

Again, the passion for aggrandisement is denied, and it is said that our wars in India were defensive wars, by way of disproving the fact. Defensive wars! why the least scrupulous of European conquerors, Louis the XIVth, Napoleon . . . all, have found the same cloak for their ambition, and called their wars defensive measures with the same assurance; so that, with the Scinde and Affghanistan wars fresh in the reader's memory, this exploded old State fiction is not worth answering, as it is not wars alone, that prove this passion for aggrandisement. The reader must recollect that it is not by conquest from enemies, but by cessions extorted from friends, from our unfortunate allies, that a great part of our territory has always been, and continues to be, obtained. The amount of territory taken by Lord Wellesley in time of peace was



prodigious, and at the present day, with profound internal peace, the process of absorbing the native States is going on steadily, not at the expense of enemies but of friends. It is no security to the native Princes to have treaties with us, or to recollect times when their alliance was hailed by us as a signal good fortune in a critical period. On some we impose contingents, which keep them in bondage, ruin their finances, force them to oppress their subjects, and end by furnishing us an excuse for interference and annexation. In the case of others, we coolly set aside the lawful succession at their deaths, turn the heirs adrift, and seize on their inheritance. In the same spirit we are confiscating the estates of the landed aristocracy, and it is believed that, what with resumption of enams and rent-free lands and lapses of jagheers, we have since 1819 appropriated landed property of the value of three millions sterling of annual revenue. And why, for what purpose, is this incessant aggrandisement? Is it to give the natives "the blessings of the British Rule?" Let us see what these blessings have been? 1stly, In Bengal, by one of the most sweeping confiscations the world ever saw, we transferred the whole landed property of the community to a body of taxgatherers; but under such conditions that this body of newly invented landlords were ruined almost to a man, and sold up by our Collectors, and their estates transferred to new men, within ten or twelve years; and in making the new landlords, we promised legislative protection to their tenants, yet we have left them from

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that day to this at the mercy of the Zemindars, and only the other day it was said by the *Friend of India*, Sept. 16th, 1852 :—" A whole century will scarcely " be sufficient to remedy the evils of that Perpetual " Settlement, and we have not yet begun the task. " Under its baneful influence a population of more than " twenty millions have been reduced to a state of such " utter wretchedness of condition and such abjectness " of feeling as it would be difficult to parallel in any " other country." 2ndly, In Madras, by another sweeping confiscation, perhaps without a precedent in history, we assumed that the Government was the owner of all property in land, and that in the words of Government, we should " avoid all material evil if " the surplus produce was in all cases made the " utmost extent of our demand ;" this being the landlord's rent, and leaving to the cultivator only a bare sufficiency for his own subsistence ; and this surplus produce being demanded from the ryots, not as a corn-rent but as a money-rent, and being assessed and collected in districts averaging 7000 square miles, and 150,000 individual tenants, by one or two Europeans, assisted by *informers*, with notoriously incorrect surveys. 3rdly, When this Ryotwar system had ruined Madras, we forced it upon Bombay, in spite of Mr. Elphinstone's opposition, and nowhere did we at any time lower our assessments until the agriculturists were beggared, and we retain the system to this day. 4thly, We established and maintained for the better part of a century, transit duties, which broke the

manufacturers, decayed the towns, and demoralised the people of India, and left it a matter of wonder that any trade could be carried on at all. 5thly, We destroyed those municipal institutions which had, according to Mr. Elphinstone, "preserved the people of India through all their revolutions, and conducted in a high degree to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence." We destroyed these, and with them the excellent arbitration system and native police which gave the people full security for person and property at the least possible cost; and we set up instead, an exotic system of English law, which has so utterly deprived the people of security, besides corrupting their morals, that in our civil courts, "which give every opening for fraud, perjury, and forgery," all the most important interests of the country have been rapidly converted and transferred, and no man's estate is safe, and in our criminal courts nothing but his most singular ill-luck can bring an accomplished criminal to justice, and even within a circle of 60 or 70 miles round our capital city of Calcutta, no man of property can retire to rest without danger of being the victim of Dacoits before morning. 6thly, We levied great taxes on the people, and drained away one-seventh of their net-revenue to England, at the same time burthening them with a load of *national debt* for the first time in their history; and yet, in spite of their admitted rights and necessities, we gave them back next to nothing in public

works ; never anything for education, unless forced by pressure from without, and the vigorous initiative of private individuals, and then as little as possible ; and in most districts beyond comparison less for roads, bridges, tanks, &c. than has been given by wealthy native merchants and country gentlemen. 7thly, We have long been systematically destroying the native aristocracy, who furnished consumers for the articles of commerce and luxury, who stimulated the production of the labourers, the manufacturers, and the merchants, who were the patrons of art, the promoters of agricultural improvement, the co-operators in public works, and the only class who could enable us to carry out any comprehensive amelioration of native society ; and we are extinguishing the native States, of which the effect is, according to Sir Thomas Munro, “ in place of raising to debase the whole people,” and according to the Duke of Wellington, “ to degrade and beggar the natives, making them all enemies ;” and meanwhile, our threat of absorption hanging over their heads, deprives both Princes and aristocracy of any inducement to improve their country. 8thly, We regard the natives rather as vassals and servants than as the ancient owners and masters of the country ; we have as little as possible of social intercourse with them, and although we allow them to do above 97 per cent of the work of administration, we monopolize the credit and emoluments of it, and keep every high office for ourselves. The establishment of our Rule in any part of India at once shuts the door

on the honest and laudable ambition of the natives ; all prospect of enjoying those honours and distinctions, and lucrative situations of trust and power, which reconcile men to the oppressions of arbitrary rulers in native States, is thenceforward cut off ; we divide the community into a government of foreign officials on the one hand, and a nation of serfs on the other ; of foreigners, constantly shifting their quarters, having no permanent connexion with the country, and always looking forward to the day when they shall return to England with a fortune, and of serfs, who are the natives of the land, linked and identified with its interests and sympathies, and many of whom are regarded as little better than menial servants, who might have been governors of provinces but for us ; all of whom are confined to such low, ill-paid offices, as we cannot fill ourselves : for instance, in the military profession, the veteran native officer is as much below the rawest European ensign as that ensign is below his commander-in-chief ; and in the civil administration, every appointment of real dignity and emolument is reserved for a covenanted European service ; and therefore did Lord William Bentinck say, after having done all that has yet been done for elevating the natives, that our system was the reverse of the Mahommedan policy, that our policy was “ cold, selfish, and unfeeling—the iron hand of power on the one side, monopoly and exclusion on the other.” And therefore do we hear of robberies and oppressions in Oude and Hyderabad, and yet the people do not fly to us, because hope is

with them, and the future is not a blank ; instead of flying into our territory, they go from it ; often in flocks ; come into it they never do ; only the other day some important works on the Kistnah were stopped because the people of the country fled, *en masse*, into the Nizam's dominions. And why do they prefer to live under "effete" native Governments ? because they do not feel themselves degraded as they do under us, for it is not the arbitrary power of a national sovereign, but subjugation to a foreign one that destroys national power and extinguishes national spirit, and with this the mainspring of whatever is laudable both in public and private life—but we make them feel the rule of the stranger to their heart's core ; we set a barrier of privilege between the natives and their foreign masters ; the lowest European officer in a black or red coat, is above every native gentleman, though the latter may be the descendant of a line of princes, and is often a man of the most chivalrous feelings and the highest accomplishments ; nevertheless, we treat them as an inferior race of beings, and we are making them so ; our monopoly of every high office, from generation to generation, is systematically degrading the people of India ; the deterioration of native character under our rule is manifest to every one ; and Sir Thomas Munro went so far as to say : "it would be more desirable that we should be expelled from the country altogether, than that the result of our system of Government should be such an abasement of a whole people." Here are samples of "the blessings of the British Rule !"

I have not the skill to state the case in eloquent language, and cannot express what I feel about it, but a man of imagination who pleaded this cause would often bring tears into his reader's eyes; however, I do beseech the reader to consider this series of facts, told in the plainest, simplest manner, and to say whether such "*blessings*" can justify our passion for aggrandizement in India? And I have not done: I have yet to describe the means and the end of gratifying this passion; because, considering that our bureaucratic, irresponsible Government of India, has lately shewn that it would no longer respect the clearest rights and treaties when it could find a pretext for grasping a little more revenue and patronage; and considering that Malcolm, Elphinstone, Metcalfe, Russell, Munro, the Duke of Wellington, and most of our great Indian statesmen, have emphatically condemned the absorption of the native States, and that our unfortunate allies, above 250 native Princes, in the presence of an overwhelming army, with no tribunal before which they can carry their complaints, and placed as a class out of the pale of the law, that they have now confiscation always hanging over their heads, I must explain the outrageous breach of faith involved in our absorption of native States, and shew what the Duke meant when he said it "degraded and beggared the natives and made them all enemies." The means now employed by the Government to absorb the native States are to deny the right of adoption. Probably the reader is aware that adoption is one of the most

solemn duties of religion in India, in the case of failure of sons: which continually happens in the reigning families. By this ceremony the adopted son becomes as much an heir as an heir of the body, and Mr. Holt Mackenzie has proved beyond dispute that there is no foundation for drawing a distinction between succession to private property and succession to political power, in the force and effect of adoption, but the adopted son acquires all and every one of the rights of a legitimate heir of the body. Of course this right of adoption is the dearest privilege of the native Princes, and the most necessary to them, as their States would soon fall into our hands without it; and this right has been given to the people of India in express words, by an early Act of Parliament, and has been formally asserted by Governors-General, as Lords Amherst, Metcalfe and Auckland, and asserted by the law officers of the Government and the courts of Bengal over and over again, and has been admitted by us for many years in the succession of native States, without any requiring of previous notice, or any reserve or qualification whatsoever, in a great number of precedents. Nevertheless, the Government has at length decided, with the object, avowed without disguise, of getting more revenue, that, as the paramount power in India, succeeding to the authority of the Emperor of Delhi, its sanction to an act of adoption is necessary, and it is entitled to withhold this sanction; and accordingly it has within the last few years set aside three adoptions, and confiscated the native states of Sattarah, Colabah, and Mandavie,



although, in each of these three cases, there were collateral blood relations and heirs of the deceased prince, after the adopted son.

Now, I will first say a few words about the Emperor of Delhi, and put him out of the way; for he has no more to do with the question than the man in the moon. When the poor Emperor came into our hands, as Scindiah's prisoner, blinded twenty years before, did we restore him to his empire? Certainly not! Did he then give us a grant of his paramount power in India? if so, how came we to make treaties with his feudatories as independent Princes? The fact is, as all the world knows, our paramount power was won, and is kept, by the sword. And such are the "blessings of the British rule," that we are obliged to remain armed to the teeth to keep it; and we had better not forget that we keep it by the sword of a native army, which has a strong personal interest in the right of adoption.

I now come to the question of the sanction. Undoubtedly, where there is a dispute or doubt as to the succession, the sanction of the paramount power is necessary; because the paramount power is entitled and bound to keep the peace in India, and to prevent any violation of rights, or outrage on the feelings of the people, which may endanger the public safety; and in a disputed or doubtful case of succession, its sanction is necessary, to prove that an adoption is legal and regular, and to award the succession to the rightful claimant. But this sanction of the paramount

power is a judicial sanction ; it is the same thing as the Lord Chancellor's decision on a will ; and when the sanction of the paramount power is required or requested in allied States, not subject or belonging to it, but connected with it by treaties, its duty is to find out the heir, and to give the succession to the heir, not to seize on the inheritance itself, in defiance of all the heirs. It was as much an act of robbery for us to appropriate the principalities of Sattarah, Calabah, and Mandavie, in defiance of all the heirs, as it would be for the Lord Chancellor to pocket a legacy, because it was being litigated in his court. We are improving upon a precedent set by Caligula, in our violation of the right of adoption. When Caligula was invited to a nuptial feast, he carried away his friend's wife : when the British Resident is invited to the death-bed of a native Prince, he turns his friend's widow and orphan out of doors, and confiscates their inheritance. And they do not take these things so quietly in the country as we do here. We hear of the absorption of a native State, and go about our business, and think no more of the matter ; like a ship's crew, who duly note in the log, " run down a vessel in the night : all hands lost ;" then pursue their voyage and forget it. But these things lodge and rankle in men's minds in India, where too many of our troops are interested in this question of adoption ; and, as I said before, the free press is doing its work.

I am convinced that the Government will some day regret the system that is making so many enemies.

It will some day absorb a native State too many, and feel a pang like one who has put a fruit into his mouth, with a hornet in it. We must not expect the Rajpūt Princes to lie still like oysters, waiting to be dredged. They are, and ever were, a high-spirited, martial race, prompt to appeal to the sword, and just the men to say, in a fit of exasperation, "better an end with fear than fear without an end." Meanwhile, the natives have a stereotyped expression for us, which gives us a false confidence. We tread on ice, and forget the current of passion flowing beneath, which imperils our footing. The natives seem what they know we expect them to appear, and we do not see their real feelings: we know not how hot the stove may be under its polished surface. For the fire is not out; we are obliged to keep it up by our native army, which may blaze into a conflagration, and burn the empire. There may be some Procida, matchless in diplomatic art and tenacity of purpose, who will travel for years to knit enemies against us; who will mine the ground under our feet, and lay the train of combustibles: there may be some outrage, which will suddenly raise a cry, terrible as that which broke forth when the bells of Monreale were sounding to vespers, a cry of "Death to the Englishmen:" there may be some conspiracy, of which, as at Vellore, we have not even a suspicion, until the native regiments open their fire on our barracks: and, as a merchant who is obliged to throw all his treasure overboard to save the ship, a storm may arise in India which will cost us more to maintain our power, than

all we have gained, or can ever hope to gain, by our confiscations.

Nor does the injury stop with the families of the Princes. Native States support a numerous class of civil and military functionaries, who cannot find employment under us; besides the holders of jagheers, enams, &c. who know that their property is doomed when they fall under our rule. And in a State like the last absorbed, in place of thirty or forty natives exercising the civil administration of affairs, with salaries of from 100 to 200 rupees a month, which they spend in the country, we substitute one or two Europeans, receiving from 2000 to 3000 rupees a month, and remitting the bulk of their salaries to England. Moreover, the bread of almost every man in and about the capital of a native State depends on the expenditure of the native Government; and not only many thousands of natives directly dependent upon it, but the manufacturers and shopkeepers dependent upon them, are nearly all ruined by our absorption; and their distress reacts on the cultivators of the soil. This is why the Duke said that absorption "degrades and beggars the natives, and makes them all enemies." Similar results follow, in proportion, from the resumption of the landed estates of the aristocracy. Shore says, "to bring the subject home to an English heart and mind, let us turn our thoughts to our native land, and compare the effects produced by individual example and influence there, with what might have been the case here. Let us represent to ourselves

“ an English country gentleman, overlooking his estate,  
“ promoting the improvement of agriculture, superin-  
“ tending the roads and public buildings, and sub-  
“ scribing to the local charities. As a neighbour,  
“ opening his house, and by his hospitality affording  
“ the means of social intercourse to his neighbours ; all  
“ the different members of his family contributing their  
“ share to the general good. Contrast the picture  
“ with the state of things in India. The upper classes  
“ of the natives, who used to occupy the above situ-  
“ ations, ruined, and their places supplied by fo-  
“ reigners, who keep aloof from the people, and  
“ whose ultimate object is to return to England with a  
“ fortune.” He adds, “ As to the number of respect-  
“ able people who have suffered, let any one leave the  
“ English stations, few and far between, and go into  
“ the country towns and villages, and there see the  
“ innumerable houses which not many years ago were  
“ in good repair, and inhabited by men who lived in  
“ the style of gentlemen, keeping up establishments of  
“ servants, horses, elephants, and equipages, but which  
“ are now all falling to decay, while their owners or  
“ their descendants are dwelling in mud huts, with  
“ little more than the merest necessities of life.” And  
let the reader recollect that the destruction of the native  
aristocracy is still going on with unremitting vigour,  
as one of the “ blessings of the British rule.”

How can we reconcile it to our conscience or our  
reason to treat the natives in this manner? It was a  
beautiful fiction of the Greeks, that Ulysses could no

longer feign madness when his child was thrown before his plough ; but we have allowed a Bureaucracy to plough over India till the “ iron has entered into the soul ” of her people, when we did not seem to be mad at all.

However, I believe there is a secret cause why the English public feel so little sympathy for the natives, which is entirely founded on a misunderstanding, and on ignorance of the native character. Lord Ellenborough said last session, that “ no intelligent people would submit to our Government ; ” and though he alone would dare to say it, I am quite satisfied in my own mind that many think it, and that my countrymen in their hearts despise the natives of India, because they do submit to our Government. Nevertheless, this submission does not argue cowardice in those who submit. We enforce submission by an overwhelming mercenary army ; and as long as that army is faithful, submission is a matter of necessity ; but although, under such circumstances they submit to our Government, there is not a race on the face of the earth who possess more personal courage than the men of India ; and the fact is not altered by their subjection to us, because the bravest people in the world may be subjugated by foreigners when they are divided against themselves, which was the case with the natives of India when we founded our empire there. And not only were they divided, but for half a century before an opening was given for our supremacy ; the great powers of the country had been shattered by wars, which may be called wars

of giants, from the magnitude of their operations. In the last great battle, in 1798, which decided the contest between the Mahrattas and Rajpûts, the forces brought into the field by the latter were 125,000 strong, and by the former 111,000 strong; large bodies of the troops on both sides being armed and disciplined in the European fashion; and I will quote the description of a charge of cavalry in this action, taken from the mouth of an eye-witness, Colonel Skinner, to shew the gallantry of the men:—"We now saw Chevalier " Dudennaig's brigade or division, which was on the " left, charged by the Rahtórs. He received them " nobly, but was cut to pieces by them. Out of 8000 " men he had not 200 left. The Rahtórs, more than " ten thousand in number, were seen approaching from " a distance; the tramp of their immense and compact " body, rising like thunder over the roar of the battle. " They came on first at a slow hand-canter, which " increased in speed as they advanced. The well- " served guns of the brigade showered grape upon " their dense mass, cutting down hundreds at each " discharge; but this had no effect in arresting their " progress. On they came, like a whirlwind, tramp- " ling over 1500 of their own body, destroyed by the " cannon of the brigade. Neither the murderous vol- " leys from the muskets, nor the serried hedge of " bayonets, could check or shake them; they poured " like a torrent on and over the brigade, and rode it " fairly down, leaving scarcely a vestige of it remain- " ing, as if the sheer weight of the mass had ground

“ it to pieces.” Again, we are accustomed to consider the battle of Waterloo one of the most sanguinary that ever was fought, yet our loss in some Indian battles has been about double the loss at Waterloo. The proportion of killed and wounded at Waterloo was one to six ; that of Assaye was just double, one to three, and several have been near it ; and the loss in the Sutlej battles, in 1846, was much more severe than that of Waterloo, being in the proportion of one to five. I could add many other proofs of the personal bravery of the natives ; but it has always been conspicuous : so I will merely remind the reader of the brilliant native armies of Clive, Lawrence, and Coote, which carved out our way to empire. And yet those armies, unrivalled for valour and loyalty, were officered by native gentlemen, with only one or two Europeans to a brigade ; and this was our original system in India, until the thirst for patronage, as usual, surmounted every other consideration, and substituted European for native officers.

Of late years sheer financial necessity has forced us to return to some extent to the old system, which is copied in our “ irregular corps ;” and the admirable state of efficiency and discipline of these “ irregular corps ” shews that we can employ the natives when we choose in situations of trust and power, and that it answers perfectly to do so. To return to my subject, I think I have said enough to shew that we should do very wrong to refuse our sympathy to the natives from a doubt of their courage ; and they have many other



qualities which entitle them to our warm and kind consideration. I have noticed in the chapter on public works, their disposition to found benevolent institutions, and they are remarkable for a degree of charity in private life which renders the poor independent of public relief in India. "Their large family circles," says Mr. Campbell, "assist and support one another to an admirable extent. Families generally live together as on the Continent, and the young men who go out to service return, and remit money most dutifully to their families." The native merchants are particularly distinguished for their honourable mode of doing business, as well as for their enterprise; and Englishmen who have resided in native States bear witness to the simplicity and straightforward manner of the agricultural classes both in their dealings with them and amongst each other. It is only when they are corrupted by external influences, by a demoralising judicial system, or oppressive taxation, that art and cunning are substituted for candour, as the only protection against the hand of injustice and power; and I will add that those who have had much intercourse with the natives, in a commercial, political, or military character, almost invariably speak of them in very high terms; it is only among such judicial functionaries as have centered their observations on the most vicious classes of native society, and have overlooked the rest, that their detractors are to be found. Finally, it has been said by one of the most experienced members of the Indian service, that, "for the transaction

“ of business, whether in accounts, diplomatic correspondence, or the conduct of judicial, magisterial, or financial affairs, the natives are seldom surpassed. They are, on the whole, an intelligent, tractable, and loyal people, not defective in energy when there is a motive for exertion, and eminently calculated to promote the arts of civil life.” And now I have done. I have shewn that although there may be more complaint of the Government of England in one year, than we hear of the Government of India during two or three Charters, yet there has been suffering, not loud but deep, in the latter country ; its cup of grief has filled silently to the brim, aye, it has filled to running over, though no man complained of it in England. The unfortunate natives have had their rights of property confiscated ; their claims on our justice and humanity trampled under foot ; their manufacturers, towns, and agriculturists beggared ; their excellent institutions broken up ; their judicial security taken away ; their morality corrupted ; their patrons systematically destroyed ; and even their religious customs violated, by what are conventionally called the “ blessings of the British rule.” These great results at once strike the eye of any man who goes seriously into the question of our Indian administration ; like the tombs by the side of the road at the entrance of ancient cities, these monuments of the power of a Bureaucracy are the first things we see, and in them lie buried the hopes of India. And as abuses were maintained in the provinces of the Roman

Republic, because the patricians who retired from their magistracy were shielded by the senate, so is the Indian Government regularly shielded by Parliament. And at this day it is an understood thing that the Legislature intends to seal the misery of India, by leasing her out for another twenty years to the present irresponsible Home Government, which will again be exhorted to *govern paternally*, just as Isaac Walton exhorts his angler, in hooking a worm, "to handle him as if he loved him." The Parliament would not dare openly and directly to oppress India, yet it votes a Bureaucracy full power to do so. I cannot help warning my countrymen that if they stand by, and look quietly on, while this political martyrdom is once more consummated, their consenting to the deed will leave a heavy debt of vengeance against them, not only on earth but in heaven; it will provoke that retributive justice, which frequently allows an individual to escape, but never, never fails to overtake a nation. Let them weigh this well before they say, On our heads and on our children's be it! It is true, that we have an overwhelming mercenary army, and the word is passed, no danger above the horizon; but some may be coming; and in history we are always wise after the event, and when it is too late, when the bolt has fallen, and the penalty has been paid, then for the first time do politicians see why a Government based on injustice and bad faith could not stand; and what innumerable consequences of its own wrong-doing were all the while undermining its power. God forbid that we should be wise too late in India!

I have one more word to say in conclusion. Never, since the world began, was so great an opportunity of doing good, offered to a great nation, as that which Providence now offers to us in India. England is the sovereign arbiter and empress of that glorious land, with its 150 millions of "intelligent, tractable, and loyal" people, and she might throw herself on the fallen empire, as Elisha did on the Shunammite's child, "and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands,"—so might England stretch herself on the prostrate Empire, and warm and quicken its torpid body, and breathe new life into India. She might raise the natives, and watch their progress, moral and material, as a mother watches her child, and loves it the better for the anxieties it has cost her; she might behold from year to year, the blessings she conferred, and feel the tie strengthening which attached her to India; she might have the answer of a good conscience, and the esteem of the whole civilized world. Oh, my countrymen! may Heaven itself soften your hearts, and awaken your sympathy for this interesting people; may it teach you not to reject your fated opportunity, nor again throw such a pearl as India, before an irresponsible Bureaucracy.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY LEGISLATION FOR INDIA.

DEAN SWIFT said, in reprobating the neglect of education in his day, that it was a common remark in families who had wealth enough to afford to have their sons good for nothing, "why should my son be a scholar, when it is not intended he should live by his learning?" He added, that by the same rule another man might say, "why should my son be honest, temperate, just, or charitable, when he does not mean to depend on any of these qualities for a maintenance!" And by the same rule the House of Commons actually do say, "why should one of the Ministry be compelled to prove the success of his department, when the Ministry does not depend on Indian affairs for its existence?" This is true enough, and the fate of an English Ministry now depends on matters of Home administration, and on Home questions, and parties, and politics, quite independent of the affairs of India. But I will shew that this state of things is eminently unsafe and unconstitutional, and from the time when, seventy years ago, a mere legislative oversight threw India out of the list of English political questions, it has been the

cause of shameful abuses in India ever since, it is the cause of perilous mal-administration at the present time, it has led to an almost incredible neglect of the subject by the House of Commons, and after all there is not in the whole range of our national interests any one more vital to the national life than our tenure of dominion in the East.

It is wonderful that my countrymen do not see the palpable contradiction of leaving India out of the list of their political questions. Why, there is not one of them of more importance to us! Is not our preservation of India an integral part of the Imperial policy? Is it not necessary to our commerce that India should be prosperous, and to our safety that it should not be disaffected? Would not a violation of religion and the rights of property, which lit a flame of insurrection in the Rajpootanah and sent over three-fourths of our Bengal seapoys to the enemy, instantly paralyze the right arm of England? Would not even a financial crisis in India shake the British Empire to its foundation? But let the reader imagine the same mistake being made in the case of England, that was made in the case of India. Let him conceive a Minister, "with a majority behind," coming down and telling the House that, "the Ways and Means were an exceedingly awkward subject; there always had been a good deal of debating and ministerial risk about it, and there always would be; therefore it would make things pleasant if the House would vote that for twenty years there should be no more Budgets; and the House should

interfere with any thing else it liked except with taxation; and if the Ministry in office, twenty years afterwards, preferred to revive the Budget, it might." Suppose such a measure had been passed in England 70 years ago, and the army had been strong enough to keep the people down, what would our commerce and rights of property have been worth now? What would have become of our municipal institutions? how much judicial reform should we have had? would there not have been an annual deficit in our finances by this time, instead of the surplus? Yet this is substantially the very same measure which was passed for India 70 years ago, and which of course removed her in a very short time from the list of our political questions, and rendered her Government so thoroughly irresponsible, that it now threatens to be the ruin of both countries. And after all, this was a mere oversight of the Legislature, and it shews how blind men are to the future, even the wisest of them, that although in those days the public mind was absorbed by Indian questions, and there was a most able and bitter opposition, eager to find any handle for an attack on the Minister, and headed by such men as Fox and Burke, not one of them foresaw an incidental and indirect consequence of Mr. Pitt's bill, which has had more effect than any direct provision, and has imperceptibly and silently produced a complete revolution in Parliamentary legislation for India, and thrown a subject which used to excite intense interest in the Parliament and the nation, out of the list of our

political questions. The point was this: as long as the Indian budget was presented to Parliament by parties indifferent to, and sometimes hostile to the Minister, and always viewed with distrust by the House of Commons, these parties were obliged to give not merely a simple publication of accounts but a periodical exposure of Indian affairs, with detailed information on all subjects connected with our Indian policy, and this kept the Members of Parliament well informed upon the question, and enabled them to discuss it, or rather ensured their discussing it, from year to year. And of course this constant supply of information was incomparably more necessary in the case of India than in any English question, not only because all kinds of political intelligence are freely published in England, which are concealed in India; but because the mere distance of the people of India from English politicians shews them to us in a point of view so remote that we are too often disposed to *see them as if they were not*, and to neglect complaints uttered so far off that they cannot reach our ears. However, from the time when the Indian budget became the Minister's budget, as he naturally did not feel inclined to provoke Parliamentary inspection of his administration, and as everybody had overlooked the necessity of making an express provision to meet the case, the periodical supply of information came to an end with the state of things which had led to it, and the consequence was that in a very few years Members of Parliament ceased to be well informed



upon the subject or competent to discuss it, and so India imperceptibly fell out of the list of our political questions, and its Government became irresponsible; and irresponsible it will remain, until the Minister is compelled to give Parliament once more a detailed annual exposure of Indian affairs. From the time when India ceased in this manner to be a political question, the neglect of it by Parliament has been something so incredible, that unless when I relate it, I could appeal to history at every step, I should not expect to be believed; and the description of it will be a lesson to Members of Parliament that they are as helpless as children in Indian affairs when they do not receive regular periodical information about them. At the time of the passing of the Charter in 1794, the House of Commons little thought that the recent "measure for the relief of the Zemindars," the "Perpetual Settlement" would effect a complete social revolution, and a sweeping confiscation of property in the doomed provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa; nor could they imagine that while Mr. Dundas was giving them a glowing description of Indian prosperity, the despatches of the Governor-General contained a minute and shocking picture of the sufferings of the people, from the vices of the Government! But at this period, from the causes above mentioned, India was already ceasing, and had almost ceased to be an English political question, and as, in Mr. Mill's words, "Ministerial influence in Parliament can always get "ministerial praises received as articles of belief,

“without any real grounds for it.” Mr. Dundas literally managed to persuade the nation that the financial state of India was a subject not merely of rejoicing and triumph, but even of astonishment, as affording a surplus revenue! A few years more threw a new and terrible light on the condition of our native fellow-subjects. The surplus revenue had turned out, as Indian surplus revenue *invariably* does, a complete bubble, and it gradually transpired in England that our unhappy provinces in India had been a scene of fiscal tyranny, of crime, and of suffering, unexampled in any civilized country since the decay of the Roman empire. Forced at length to investigate, the House of Commons in 1810, not only corroborated the above charges, but accused the Indian Government of continual misrepresentation; “whether the Zemindar or the ryot were the sufferer, the Government always found something to commend.” Meanwhile, as if to balance the calamities of our northern Provinces, a new revenue system called ryotwar was introduced in the south, viz. a settlement with individual cultivators on the basis of assuming 50 per cent of the produce, *in money*, as the due of the Government! After some years experience of this system its originator had discovered that “its radical defect” was our over-assessment, which augments the public “and reduces the private property in the soil to such a degree as to involve the necessity of ousting all between the Government and the cultivator.” This was indeed a *radical defect*; it was simply the confiscation

of all the landlord's property in the soil by foreign conquerors! Moreover, the Madras Board of Revenue had accused the inventors of this system of "ignorantly denying, and by their denial abolishing private property in land," and though "professing to limit their demand on each field, in fact by establishing for such limit an unattainable maximum, assessing the ryot at discretion." Finally, the ablest administrator of the ryotwar system, Sir Thomas Munro, had declared that unless the assessment were reduced from 25 to 33 per cent, the land would go out of cultivation. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, the Government had but recently enforced the adoption of this ryotwar system, without any reduction of the assessment, when, under such circumstances, the House of Commons was once more called upon solemnly to judge the Indian Government, and to confirm or alter a system which had produced so much pain and ruin, and threatened to produce so much more. I pass over judicial and other grievances for the present, but with the above facts recorded on official authority, the House of Commons discussed the renewal of the Charter in 1813. Surely it was then at length time to do something for the natives; time to amend a despotic Government evidently well adapted for conquest and aggrandisement, but for nothing else; time to revive the periodical statement of Indian affairs, which used to draw public attention to them almost every year; time to adopt the plan recommended so long before by Warren Hastings, and

again urged by the Marquis of Wellesley, to ascertain and define the rights of property of every description in land, and make such definitions the basis of adjudication. But no! it is painful to record the transaction. The natives of India were treated like so many cattle. Their interests, their feelings, their hopes, and their fears, were alike forgotten. The only thing the House of Commons was well informed about was certain private, pecuniary, English interests. The battle of the Charter was fought over the heads of the natives, by parties eager for their trade, but too eager to give a thought to the myriads of human beings who yielded its profit. The leaders in the House of Commons, that is, ministers intent on securing Parliamentary support, Directors and merchants, greedy for private interests, at length struck their bargain, and having done the best they could for themselves, and professed much concern for the natives, they agreed on a fresh twenty years lease of India, to the old irresponsible Government. And now the "radical defect" was allowed to have full swing—the House of Commons had decided that a system which "ousted all between the government and the cultivator," and "assessed the ryot at an unattainable maximum," might be applied with impunity to the natives of India, and the ryotwar system fell with crushing effect on our southern provinces. The miserable inhabitants of Madras endured this oppression until the year 1827, when Sir Thomas Munro carried out, as Governor, the reductions he had recommended

in 1807. And this relief was only obtained at last by the efforts of Sir Thomas Munro and other private individuals, and the pressure of public opinion, not by any act of the House of Commons, which never interfered to protect the natives, nor manifested the slightest sympathy with their sufferings, though it had reserved to itself full power to superintend and control the Indian Government. In the year 1833, the necessity for renewing the Charter once more brought the whole question of Indian administration under the consideration of the House of Commons. There had now been half a century's experience of irresponsible Government in India, and again the House of Commons had the opportunity of altering or confirming the normal system of confiscation which had consigned Bengal to ruin in 1793, Madras in 1813, and which was beginning to crush Bombay in 1833. Moreover, there was now abundant information, which might have been accessible to the House of Commons, of the sufferings and claims of the natives in other respects. The frightful evils of the judicial system had been incessantly recorded by official authority for nearly forty years—the necessity of constructing public works had been loudly proclaimed—the transit duties, now completing the ruin of the manufacturers and towns of India, had been denounced as “the curse of the country”—the attempt to conduct all affairs by European agency, and exclude the natives from every office which it was possible to offer to an Englishman, had been confessed a notorious failure—

the destruction of the native municipal institutions had been admitted to be subversive of the security of person and property among the people—the inhumanity and impolicy of destroying the native territorial aristocracy had been strikingly exposed by Sir John Malcolm and others—the identical recommendation of Warren Hastings and the Marquis of Wellesley, which I have already mentioned, had now been endorsed by the great name of Lord Hastings; and finally the most fatal instance of the operation of “the revenue screw” that ever was known in India, the famous Bundelkund case, was going on at this very time,—and what did the House of Commons do? They met the judicial evils by the mockery of an additional member of Council at Calcutta; they met the necessity of appointing the natives to high office, strongly insisted on by such men as Malcolm, Elphinstone, and Munro, by the mockery of declaring their eligibility, and leaving it to the Directors to carry out this eligibility, who of course treated it with utter contempt. In fact, they shewed as before, that the only matters on which they were really well-informed were certain private, pecuniary, English interests. There was still a rag of the Company’s trade to be fought for, and this fight the House of Commons understood and sympathised with, but beyond this they shewed that they did not look upon their responsibility in legislating for so many millions of our native fellow subjects as being really serious, that they were ready to vote anything that suited the Ministry of the

day in Indian affairs, and that they performed this duty of deciding questions on which the welfare of India was to depend for another twenty years, "not merely with indifference to, but with feelings of impatience and disgust at," the whole subject. Of course, under such circumstances, not one of the above grievances was redressed, or even discussed in earnest. As wretched mariners who approach the harbour-light, only to be driven out to sea again by the storm, the unfortunate natives only witnessed a renewal of the Charter to have all their hopes disappointed, and India was again consigned to an irresponsible Government for another twenty years, to undergo all the mal-administration I have described, and a great deal more than I have described. And this "not mere indifference to, but rather feeling of impatience and disgust at," everything which concerns the natives of India, is still the prevailing sentiment in the House of Commons. It is still the case that, as Mr. Macaulay has told us, an inquiry into a row at Covent Garden would ensure fuller benches in the House than the most important subject connected with India. The debate of June, 1850, was one signal instance of it, and I will now give another. There never was a more "wicked war" and a more wholly unjustifiable measure than our invasion of Afghanistan; it is difficult to reckon the number of millions which it has added, immediately and by its consequences, to the debt of India, and it was plunged into in spite of the most energetic remonstrances and warnings, and explanations of its

impolicy, by all those who were competent to offer an opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, Parliament hardly made a pretence of calling to account the irresponsible Minister who said "I did it," and who coolly avowed many years afterwards that it was "a folly if not a crime," and the presentation of a Blue-book, which Captain Kaye has since gibbeted as the grossest specimen of "official lying" that ever insulted a country, at once satisfied the House of Commons.

Now, as this case only came out by accident, we are left to wonder how many millions have been added to the debt of India, by the "follies if not crimes" of our irresponsible Ministers, which have not come out? and, what is still more important, *how many will be added hereafter?* For every irresponsible Minister knows he has nothing to fear from Parliament; and as the ultimate burthen of every "folly if not a crime" falls on the back of the miserable ryots, nobody cares and nobody complains to any purpose in England. However, there is a time for all things, and this system of abuse has had its day, and though I would rather urge reform on higher grounds than those of mere self-interest, I must remark that in such a state of the finances and resources of India as those described in my sixth chapter, something must be done, and done at once, if we mean to avert a catastrophe. For there is reason to believe that the financial state of our Indian empire is really much worse than the studiously mystified and maimed financial report of the Blue-book enables us to prove; but even



from the imperfect data furnished by the Blue-book, any one may see that a crisis is at length approaching, and that our present system of Indian administration must be leading to some fearful tragedy.

I will therefore remind the reader of a few of the most urgent wants of the present system for which I have explained the necessity in this book. 1stly, The condensation of that immense mass of detailed correspondence now transmitted to England, which renders it impossible for Indian Ministers or Directors to read the reports, and thereby reduces the Home Government under the power of a Bureaucracy. And well do the Bureaucracy understand their interest in this matter, for, as Mr. Campbell informs us, page 216, the Governor-General made one or two attempts to condense and arrange the shiploads of papers now sent home from India, and such measures were at once reversed and disallowed by the Home Government. 2ndly, A system of accounts not "made up in a way to deceive the public," to use the words of the Friend of India, by putting down *different* receipts and charges in separate Presidencies under *the same* heads; by omitting the detail of receipts and charges, so that it is impossible to find out the cause of their rise or decline and their ultimate prospects; and in the ways noticed at page 124 and Appendix C. 3rdly, The concession of that administrative power to the local Governments which they alone are competent to exercise, and for the judicious use of which they will be responsible, and depriving them of that political power

for which the Supreme Government will be found a more disinterested depositary. At present we do the very reverse of this; we allow a political power to the local Governments which enables them to involve us in a Coorg war, a Khutputt case at Baroda, &c., and we refuse them sufficient administrative power to make a ghaut or a pier. 4thly, The settlement of the land tax on the principles of the North-western Provinces. 5thly, The expenditure by the local Government of 5 per cent of the land revenue on public works. 6thly, Legal reform, and the restoration of the *indigenous* local self-government of our Indian fellow subjects, and their popular representation to a considerable extent, through their 'head-men' of villages, towns, and counties. 7thly, A just and generous policy towards the Indian princes and aristocracy, and a fair share of official power and emoluments for the natives.

I have therefore proposed to reform those evident abuses in the Home Government to which I trace all the evils of India, by cutting down the Bureaucracy, purifying the Court of Directors, and making the Indian Minister responsible to Parliament. Less than this will not do; but this is merely a practical reform of proved abuses; it is no theoretic innovation; it is no construction of a "model Government" on abstract principles. Indeed, I have not the least idea that the old grievances of India can be cured in a day by any model Government, nor if I could get the same parliamentary representation for India that existed 70 years

ago, should I expect to see any inveterate grievance immediately redressed. For instance, supposing my plan were adopted, and the Minister were compelled to give a full annual communication of Indian affairs, then the way would probably be this : some friend of India would go to a Member of Parliament and say, " When the Minister makes his statement, see what he says on a particular subject, and then ask him such and such questions, or state such and such facts." Well, the Member of Parliament would play his part, and the official man, having had due notice, would make a most satisfactory reply, and the House, who were beginning to feel uncomfortable, would be glad to see the complaint so effectually disposed of. However, next Session the complaint would reappear, with a complete exposure of any official fraud and sophistry by which it had been met the year before, with a larger array of facts in its support, with more Members knowing the circumstances of the case, with the advantage perhaps of having appealed to the press in the interval, and it appears by one of my authorities that the *Times* has shewn its readiness to open its columns to any well authenticated case of Indian grievance, and let any one imagine this going on, not for one or two, but for five, or six, or seven years, with a heavier weight of proof thrown into the discussion every year, and the ripple gradually widening and circling round the public, and then say whether it is not probable that, under such circumstances, an Indian grievance would be redressed in a few years? But let me re-

mind the reader that it would be a new life for India to have the chance of getting a grievance redressed in a few years! Under the present system every evil principle of administration is allowed to work itself fairly out, and exhaust all the poison in its nature, before there is any change, so that when at last necessity enforces a change, the mischief done is irreparable. And meanwhile, it is utterly useless to appeal to the Bureaucracy, for the atmosphere of office seems to harden their hearts and render their minds callous to impressions from without, till it changes their very nature; as certain springs have the property of petrifying bits of wood that fall into their water. I emphatically repeat that no reform is more urgently required than this one of giving *by word of mouth* a periodical supply of information on all subjects connected with our Eastern policy to the House of Commons. Let the Minister be compelled to give an account of his stewardship, to give a detailed statement of Indian affairs once a year, and Members of Parliament would again become competent to discuss the subject; and again they would discuss it, again the Government would become responsible, and the grievances of the natives would be redressed, simply because men were informed of them. I will appeal to human nature and to our every day experience for proof of what I say. Why have I written this book, why have I spoken warmly (perhaps too warmly, but my heart has burned within me to see the injury to India and the peril to England), why have I taken so much trouble

about this question? because I was informed of the facts, and other men were not. And in moral qualities I have always observed that the mass of mankind were exactly like myself, neither better nor worse. I have always seen that any gross outrage on common sense and justice, particularly against their own interests, shocked other men just as it did me, when they found it out. And though it may please certain novelists to describe us as purely selfish beings, that is not a true portrait of human nature; there is a divine spark at the bottom of every man's heart which will leap into life when it is properly appealed to; and it is appealed to, every day, among us, in private and in public, in the press and the Parliament, and in no country is it more prompt to answer the appeal.

What is the difference between a Member of Parliament who shews "not merely indifference to, but feelings of impatience and disgust at," the performance of a sacred duty to India, and myself? It is that he has not information and I have. Give him information and he will be as warm for justice to India as I am, for our nature is exactly the same. But some people can trust nothing to human nature; they prefer to invent model Governments to do the work of human nature; it is like the Romans building such expensive aqueducts, because they never thought of water finding its own level. And look at our daily experience. What is the Parliament, and the press, and the system which draws such a degree of popular reverence and attachment to our institutions, as ensured sweet calm

in England, when a hurricane raged over the rest of Europe? Aye! it made our isle a charmed spot where the demon of revolutions could not set his foot; and it procures a visible respect for the law in this nation which astonished the foreigners who visited our Exhibition, more than anything else they saw. What is all this but a system of representation? of representing to the Legislature the wants, and wishes, and claims, and grievances of the people? of informing the Legislature what they feel, and suffer, and hope from its sympathy, or expect from its justice? And why is this system so loved by the people, and so universally admired and envied by foreigners? because it gives the people a guarantee that they shall be governed by equal laws, and that their grievances shall be redressed. Not that it prevents grievances! no system ever did, or could, or ever will do so.

But now see the cruel injustice we are doing to India! We do not find it too much for ourselves to have a Parliament sitting for months every year, to correct and extend our legislation and suit it to our social changes; to have besides the most perfect representation of all our complaints and desires in the press which it is possible to conceive; and with all this to watch vigilantly the responsibility of every depositary of power amongst us, as our only security against official tyranny, neglect, incompetency, and plunder; and, after all, we prove many serious grievances, and the reader of the public journals for the last year alone is familiar with much deserved

blame of every department of our Administration, of the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Horse Guards, the Admiralty, the Customs, &c. Can we then affect to believe that a sham inquiry once in 20 years, with almost total neglect in the interval, is sufficient to redress the grievances of India? Can we pretend to think that the despotic administration of 150 millions of men, conducted at a distance of many thousand miles away from us, by a few hundred foreigners, having little intercourse with the natives and no permanent stake in their country, and directed by irresponsible Home Authorities, who betray the utmost anxiety to conceal the truth from the public, can we pretend to think that such an Administration has done or is doing justice to the people of India, without being checked by a particle of anything like political representation? Would not any man who had studied history or human nature, divine all the injury and injustice to the natives which I have described, from merely knowing the conditions of our irresponsible Indian Government? Let the reader conceive any one English question, parliamentary reform, legal reform, free trade, any one of them, being turned over to the Ministry of the day and their successors for 20 years, to give or withhold, at their pleasure, without hearing one word of explanation, or remonstrance, or information of our interest in the matter, and our sufferings for want of a legislative remedy. Would not this seem monstrous in our own case? Why then do we unscrupulously apply it to

India? Why do we treat, not one, but all, of her vital questions and dearest interests in a manner which seems monstrous when applied to ourselves? Oh, my countrymen! do not continue this inhuman system. Do not consign India to an irresponsible Government for another 20 years, and coldly tell her "abi in pace," as the Inquisition used to say in sending its victims back to the torture, when you know it must lead to cruel neglect and mal-administration.

The Indian Government was originally responsible to Parliament, and it is only by an unheard-of abuse, repugnant alike to our principles, and customs, and institutions, and to all our English notions of what is right, that this Government has become irresponsible. Do not permit such an abuse to go on, particularly because England is exposed to great and increasing peril while the Indian Government is allowed to be irresponsible. I shall be met, I know, by the old argument that the Legislature cannot make any change because Indian reformers do not agree among themselves upon what ought to be done. But is this argument really serious? Why men must have remained savages ever since the creation of the world, if nothing had ever been done till all men were agreed upon what ought to be done. The argument is as much as to say there shall be no progress until a condition is complied with, which is notoriously impossible. Besides, I apprehend that it is not merely the function of legislators to redress grievances, but their duty to find out the means of doing so. There is not the same obligation on a private



person who proves the grievance; he is only one of the patients; a legislator is the state physician; and if it is not the business of Members of Parliament to know and apply the proper cure for political grievances, then what is their business? Conceive the doctor of a consumptive hospital telling his patients, "My poor friends, one of you thinks one thing would be good for his case, and another fancies something else, now I know how to cure your disease, because it is my profession to understand it, and therefore do I hold the honorable appointment of your medical man, nevertheless as your own opinions about your treatment differ, I beg you will excuse me from giving you any prescription at all." Should we not think that a doctor who held this language had gone out of his mind? Yet it is just the same thing for our legislators to say they cannot make any change because Indian reformers do not agree about what ought to be done. After all, if Indian reformers do not agree about the remedy, they all agree about the great abuse of the Indian Government, viz.: its want of parliamentary responsibility. Every independent writer on India for the last fifty years, has emphatically denounced this abuse, and therefore it is the duty of the legislature to find a remedy for it. If Members of Parliament cannot fulfil this duty, they are not fit for the dignified positions they occupy; if they will not fulfil it, their refusal will lead to fatal results in India, long before another Charter is over. This is the opinion of every eminent man of long experience in that country,

whom I have had the honour to know, and it is worth the serious consideration of the British public.

And now I have done what I could to assist a righteous cause, and in this crisis of the Charter, when the future destiny of England is depending upon her choice of a policy towards her Eastern Empire, I expect that you too, reader, will do your duty—and may the Almighty Disposer of events, who has hitherto signally protected and blessed us—and has he not blessed us? are not the signs of his favour visible on every side? is it not written on our Houses of Parliament, and our Protestant churches? on the glories of our literature, and arts, and sciences? on the triumphs of our industry and invention? on the very look of the people, on all that meets the eye of an Englishman? and is it not an ungrateful return for his bounty to abuse that power over a hundred and fifty millions of our fellow creatures which he has given us in the East? may it not provoke him to punish an ungrateful race, and to cut off the inheritance of his blessings from the sons of those who turn his benefits against him? Yet now, while the fate of two Empires is trembling in the balance, even now may His mercy once more lighten upon us, and may He inspire the Great Council of the nation to frame such a legislative measure, as shall give justice to India; and thereby secure the safety and honour of England!

## APPENDIX A.

*Abstract of the expenditure on public works in Bengal and the North-West Provinces, for the ten years ending 1848-49, as contained in the Blue Book printed by order of the House of Commons, August 1, 1851.*

Classification of Works.	Expenditure in the N.W. Provinces.	Expenditure in Bengal.	Total Expenditure.
On constructing, improving, and repairing roads	995357	7416659	8412516
Ditto, ditto, bridges	339076	696914	1035990
Total for roads and bridges	1334933	8113573	* 9448506
On canals and embankments, and works of irrigation	4758394	433895	† 5192289
Total for roads, bridges, canals, embankments, and works of irrigation	6093327	8547468	† 14640795
On repairs and construction of civil buildings	632635	3329425	3962060
Total expenditure by amount stated in the Blue Book	6725962	11876893	18602855

Mean of annual gross revenue for the ten years, &c., rupees, 14,69,58,709, or £14,695,870.

Mean of annual net revenue for the ten years, &c., rupees, 11,87,82,243, or £11,878,224.

\* Mean of expenditure on roads and bridges for the ten years, &c., rupees, 9,44,850 or £94,485—shewing that less than three quarters of one per cent of the gross revenue, that is, less than £110,218, was expended on roads and bridges.

† Mean of expenditure on canals, embankments, and works of irrigation, for the ten years, &c., rupees, 5,19,228, or £51,922—shewing that less than the half of one per cent of the gross revenue, that is, less than £73,479, was expended on canals, embankments, and works of irrigation.

‡ Mean of expenditure on roads, bridges, canals, embankments, and works of irrigation, for the ten years, &c., rupees, 14,64,079, or 146,407—shewing that less than one and a quarter per cent of the net revenue, or less than £148,477, was expended altogether on public works other than civil buildings.

With the above statement before him, let the reader remember the proofs given in the Madras Engineer's letter, that public works in India produce more wealth both to the Government and the people than any gold mine has been known to produce.

## APPENDIX B.

## LAND REVENUE.

It is difficult to draw any conclusion as to the resources of the people from the produce of the land tax, as the receipts are continually swelled by lapses and resumptions, which augment the temporary revenue by weeding out the capitalists among the landowners; and by annexations, which are often not a gain but a loss to the general treasury; for instance, p. 468, par. 65, 66, states that Sattarah, recently annexed, is a loss to the finances of the state, though a gain to the land revenue of nearly 20 lacs! It requires therefore a knowledge of the particular items of this branch of revenue to draw any certain conclusion from it, and these particulars are not given in any public document. I will however state some general results and add a few comments upon them.

*Bengal*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual falling off in the last four years of Rs. 3,47,616.

*Agra*—(old territory, excluding the Sutej annexations.) The four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual falling-off in the last four years of Rs. 3,25,163.

*Bombay*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual falling off\* in the last four years of Rs. 1,47,265.

*Madras*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an annual increase† in the last four years of Rs. 24,21,306.

\* I have deducted the increased revenue charges, p. 451, par. 11, because the Blue-book misstates the case as to the *increase* of these revenue charges. The fact is that "costs of collection" have been put down in the receipts of the Bombay land revenue of late years, which were not previously included in them. It is another proof of the want of detailed items of receipts and charges.

† The Blue-book states, p. 453. par. 16, that a portion of this increase is a set off against a loss of 28 lacs, by the repeal of the "transit duties," which must be the case as these duties were far more inquisitorial and destructive of industry in Madras than any where else. However, on making application to the India House, to know the particulars of the Madras increase, I received information that the greater part of it was due to lapses and resumptions, quite independent of the ordinary land revenue of the Presidency. It is therefore impossible to arrive at any certain financial conclusion from the published accounts of the land-tax, and it will require full particulars of the receipts and charges to shew the prospects of the Indian Exchequer, and the real condition of the people.

## SALT REVENUE.

The Blue-Book states, p. 454, 456, par. 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, that owing to the large importation of salt since the reduction of the duty, the receipts of the Government salt monopoly are rapidly declining, and it estimates the average annual decreased receipt\* at 23 lacs in Bengal, 2 lacs in Madras, and 2 lacs in Bombay.

## CUSTOMS REVENUE.

These receipts exhibit a falling off at one Presidency, from the abolition of the transit duties, and a still larger increase in others from the progressive importation of salt, but with a most unsatisfactory result on the whole which will require some comments.

*Bengal*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual increase in the last four years of Rs. 12,34,153.

*Agra*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual increase in the last four years of Rs. 10,90,532.

*Madras*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual falling off in the last four years of Rs. 18,34,695.

*Bombay*—the four years ending 1849-50, in comparison with the four years ending 1845-6, exhibit an average annual falling off in the last four years of Rs. 6,95,586.

The total falling off on the receipts of above Presidencies, is Rs. 2,05,596.

I cannot but regard this result as a very bad symptom, and the index of a decline in the tax-paying powers of the people; for the annually increasing item of salt forms considerably more than half of the customs receipts of Bengal, and four-fifths of those of Agra, therefore, excepting the salt, I infer from the above result a decided and marked decline in the commerce of the Natives in other articles; and this conclusion is strongly confirmed by the following view, of the exports and imports.

\* The cheapening of this necessary of life is indispensable to the health of the people, whatever loss it may be to the Government; and even now, the Natives, who live far more on vegetable diet than Europeans do, suffer severely in the interior of the country from the high price of salt.

## IMPORTS.

Comparative statement of the value of merchandize imported into the Presidencies of British India, from the United Kingdom and other countries, from the four years ending 1845-6 and 1849-50.

		From the United Kingdom. Rs.	From other countries. Rs.
Bengal, } Madras, } Bombay, }	Average annual value during the four years ending 1845-6.	25,13,15,728	10,13,13,728
Bengal, } Madras, } Bombay, }	Average annual value during the four years ending 1849-50.	25,30,17,240	10,83,72,503

shewing a falling off in the value of the imports from the United Kingdom during the last four years of Rs. 82,98,488, and an increase of those of other countries of Rs. 70,58,775.

## EXPORTS.

Comparative statement of the value of merchandize exported from the Presidencies of British India, to the United Kingdom and other countries, for the four years ending 1845-6 and 1849-50.

		To the United Kingdom. Rs.	To other countries. Rs.
Bengal, } Madras, } Bombay, }	Average annual value during the four years ending 1845-6.	27,48,06,571	36,94,35,307
Bengal, } Madras, } Bombay, }	Average annual value during the four years ending 1849-50.	25,41,39,431	36,65,46,925

shewing a falling off in the value of the exports to the United Kingdom during the last four years of Rs. 2,06,67,140, and a falling off in those to other countries of Rs. 28,88,382.

In this state of the resources of the Government and the people, the debt goes on increasing, and the cause of debt, *viz.* territorial aggrandisement goes on *pari passu*. Mr. Campbell published a book last year stating, p. 148, that we had "at last reached the limit of and become supreme in *all* India. We have the whole country in our power to do as we will with, and we have a natural line of circumvallation "dividing it from the rest of the world." Hardly was the

book published before the Government began a Burmese war—a war for which I can only conceive two even rational motives, that is, either the pressure of those private interests which seek for employment and promotion; or else the old policy of statesmen, as old as the time of Pericles, of plunging into a war to hide the embarrassment of their accounts by war charges. If this last motive be the true one, the Burmese war will be a dear way of passing the Indian accounts, for it is likely to prove quite as expensive as the last war which in two years added thirteen millions and a half to the debt,\* and it will end as usual by annexation, and leave us with the certainty of future hostilities, aggrandisement and debt on a new and very exposed frontier, where we have already sown the seeds of another war by our differences with Siam in 1850. The same system is pursued on the other side of India. Before the Affghanistan war the highest authorities opposed it;† but in vain. Before the Caubul disaster it was pointed out, not only privately to the ministry, but to the nation,‡ that we possessed an impregnable frontier on the north-west, in the line from Loodianah to the sea; but in vain. The system prevailed, the line was passed, gradually Scinde, the Sutlej territories, and the Punjaub were annexed, and thus since 1839, about sixteen millions and a half were added to the debt,§ about 100,000 men to the standing army,|| with a corresponding increase in the export of stores,¶ the dead weight at home and abroad,\*\* the charges for the navy, &c.;†† and at the present day the Indian Press cries out, that the Governor-General can only be waiting for the conclusion of the Burmese war, to commence offensive operations against the Affghans. Under these circumstances, I derive no consolation from the argument I often hear, that the debt of India is little more than two years income, and good management would soon raise the revenues of the country so enormously that the debt would cease to be formidable. Let me suggest to the reader a parallel case in private life. Suppose a particular individual was on the road to ruin, and

\* Blue Book, 1852, p. 485, par. 102.

† Kaye's Affghanistan, vol. 1, p. 363.

‡ Article in the Indian News of Oct. 1841, on "the North Western Alliance;" vide Appendix D.

§ Blue Book, p. 485, par. 106.

|| Ib. 498, 409.

¶ Ib. 278, 279.

\*\* Ib. 479, 433, 480, par. 94, (I find no account in the Blue Book of the pensions to superannuated Native soldiers.)

†† Ib. p. 429, 783, 474 to 477.

all advice, information, and remonstrance were thrown away upon him, although his failure would involve the reader's fortune. Would it console the reader to be told that if this individual only understood his business, and would manage it prudently, he need not become bankrupt? I am inclined to think not: yet it is precisely the same case with the irresponsible administration of India. The permanent resources of the empire are wholly unable to meet the charge of the present debt, and yet the Government does not develop the country's means of production, but trusts to a merely gambling illicit source of income, for one-fifth of its gross revenue; in spite of the great probability of seeing it suddenly cut off. At the same time as the Government gets credit because England is the real security for Indian loans, it makes up any deficit by borrowing more capital, and perseveres in that policy of aggrandisement, which causes a progressive increase of the debt. Of course, I cannot tell how long such a system may go on, but any body can tell how it must end.

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### APPENDIX C.

It happens by an exception to the rule, that the conqueror of Scinde has fallen out with the Court of Directors, and without noticing the cause of their quarrel, the revenge of the Bureaucracy is something so peculiar and so characteristic of the class, that I must direct public attention to it.

Because Sir Charles Napier is a foe, every charge incurred by annexing Scinde is brought prominently forward, and I think with exaggeration, and the financial result of his annexation is exhibited as a heavy annual excess of charge on the Indian revenue. Because Lords Hardinge and Dalhousie are friends, the bulk of the charges incurred by their annexations, are literally altogether suppressed, the receipts are put prominently forward, and the financial result of annexing the Punjaub is exhibited as a surplus. For instance, p. 467, the following six items, Military charges; Extraordinary military charges; Ditto war charges; Commissariat charges; Extraordinary military charges; Arrears of Commissariat, &c. are credited against Scinde, since the date of annexation, amounting in round numbers to the sum of three millions sterling. On the opposite page not one of these items is inserted in the Punjaub accounts, and so completely is every



charge for the Punjab force suppressed, that we could not even trace its existence without ransacking the Blue Book, till we find a "distribution return," p. 410, which lets out that, besides local and irregular corps, there are 34,000 regular troops in the Punjab, including 5,765 Europeans. Again, p. 448, Scinde is accused of having added heavily to the debt, which is proved, p. 446, by the increase of the interest of the debt contemporary with the annexation of Scinde. But by the same rule, when I find at p. 479, an enormous increase of the interest of the debt contemporary with the annexations of Lords Hardinge and Dalhousie, I feel bound to accuse these annexations of having been a much greater annual excess of charge on the Indian revenues than the annexation of Sir Charles Napier, notwithstanding that "things are made pleasant" for Lord Dalhousie at p. 466, by proving the Punjab a *surplus*!

The above is an average specimen of the honesty of Indian Blue Books, and unless the public agree with Hudibras that,

"Surely the pleasure is as great

"In being cheated as to cheat,"

I hope they will not tolerate the system of mystification any longer.

#### APPENDIX D.

I ADD an extract from the "Indian News" of 1841, to show how our national interests have been, and ever will be, sacrificed to private motives for war and aggrandisement, under an irresponsible Government of India:—

##### "THE NORTH-WESTERN DILEMMA.

"The present is a fitting opportunity to lay before our readers as complete a view of the question relating to the North-Western Frontier of India as our space permits. A new Ministry is in power, and a Ministry opposed from the first to the policy of the old. Our Indian finances are in a state of absolute ruin, and the government trying, in desperation, to outbid the merchants for those funds which in the hands of the latter are the life-blood of commerce. All our projects have been accomplished; all our enemies beaten; Dost Mahomed is down—Shah Soojah is up; and yet at every step of our advance, we have departed further and further

ther from that security which was our ulterior object, and for which we have scattered treasure as if it had been dust, and shed blood as if it had been water.

"It is possible some of our readers may be unacquainted with the nature of the frontier we have of late years been so busily occupied in extending, or rather forsaking: and if so, our repeated declaration that the Indus is the natural boundary of our dominion in that quarter may have given rise to some misapprehension. The Indus is our boundary only as the outermost ditch may be called the boundary of a fortress; and even in that sense it is less important for defence than as affording a means for the conveyance of troops. Within the line of the Indus is *Maroost'hali*, or the Region of Death, a vast wilderness of sand, resembling the Libyan desert, both in its general aspect of desolation and in its oases. From Hyderabad, as far north as Ooch, in looking eastward from the river, the visible horizon is a bulwark of sand, frequently two hundred feet high, guarding the valley of the Indus like the wall of a fortress. Beyond this western boundary the desert stretches hundreds of miles to the east, till it is walled in by the Aravulli, a chain of mountains extending from Delhi almost to the sea. On the north, it meets the valley of the Sutlege, and on the south is lost in the Runn, or great salt marsh of Cutch. 'Instead of the ancient Roman simile,' says Colonel Tod, 'which likened Africa to the leopard's hide, reckoning the spots thereon as the oases, I would compare the Indian desert to that of the tiger, of which its long dark stripes would indicate the expansive belts of sand elevated upon a plain only less sandy.' Mr. Elphinstone describes the northern part of the desert as consisting principally of hills and valleys of loose and heavy sand. 'The hills were exactly like those which are sometimes formed by the wind on the sea-shore, but far exceeding them in height, which were from twenty to a hundred feet. They are said to shift their position and alter their shapes, according as they are affected by the wind, and in summer the passage is rendered dangerous by the clouds of moving sand.' In the journey of this accurate observer from Delhi to Cabool, he found a hundred miles of the desert before reaching Bahawalpoor absolutely destitute of inhabitants, water, or vegetation. The actual distance, besides, was increased by their being obliged to wind round the sand hills; while the path was so narrow as not to admit of two camels going abreast, and if an animal stepped on one side, it sunk above the knees as in snow.

"The wells found here and there in the desert, but frequently from fifty to a hundred miles apart, are so deep (sometimes five hundred feet) that, as Colonel Tod remarks, 'with a large *kafla* many might die before the thirst of all could be slaked.' This illustrates the fearful description given by *Ferishta* of the sufferings of the Emperor Hemayoon: 'The country through which they fled being an entire desert of sand, the Moghuls were in the utmost distress for water: some ran mad; others dropped down dead. For three whole days there was no water; on the fourth day they came to a well which was so deep that a drum was beaten to give notice to the men driving the bullocks that the bucket had reached the top; but the unhappy followers were so impatient for drink, that as soon as the first bucket appeared, several threw themselves upon it, before it had quite reached the surface, and several fell in.'—*Briggs' Ferishta*, vol. ii. Hunger is of course a scourge of these desolate regions only second to thirst. The visitations of the *Bookha Mata*, the 'famished mother,' form the staple of the native legends from the earliest time; and the traditions of the oases forming some of the Rajpoot states, point to a famine which occurred in the eleventh century, and lasted twelve years. At the present day a partial visitation is calculated upon every third year; and one year out of seven is always a year of actual famine.

"But even the Aravulli mountains, which bound the desert on the east, are not our last rampart, for, beyond these, the Rajpoot princes, our feudal vassals, form the advanced guard of British India. Such is the frontier—consisting of the Indus, the desert, the Aravulli and Rajahsthan, which we now voluntarily overstep; a frontier which, taking its whole length from the Himalaya to the sea, is singularly small for so vast an empire, but which is diminished to about *thirty miles* by coincidences of nature as marvellous as the folly which disregards them. Abandoning this actual frontier of thirty miles, at Loodiana—the north-western gate of British India—and not permitted to pass through the Punjaub, we descend the Sutlege from Ferozepore, place in our rear the Region of Death and our other natural defences, and plunge into the western desert of the Indus, in order to force the Bolan pass into Afghanistan, and chase the wild Beloochees through their barren and interminable wastes. We have thus pushed our frontier—which may now be said to be at Herat, and Kirman in Persia—600 miles beyond its natural and safe position; we have extended its only vulnerable part from thirty

miles to at least seven hundred ; we have quitted the centre of our resources in money, food and men ; and have not only placed between us and them an almost impassable desert, but have scattered our forces over a wide, poor, and scantily peopled region. Finally, we are teaching, day by day, the science of war to these barbarian enemies ; and the rising generation of a host of tribes, occupying a breadth of country from Herat to the Indian Ocean, is growing up in horror and detestation of our very name.

“ Such is our present position ; and one would suppose that we must have been driven into it by some extraordinary force of circumstances, too sudden for human policy to avert, and too mighty for human power to withstand. But in vain we look back to the beginning of this fatal end ; we can trace no cause but individual will. Dost Mahomed was then the popular chief of his wild domain, and seeking to recover a portion of the territory he had lost. We refused him our assistance ; and because he would not bind himself to reject the assistance of others, then our actual allies, we commenced this extraordinary war. But we were not satisfied with dragging Dost Mahomed from his mountain throne ; it was necessary to put into it a man who, within the last twenty years, had been twice driven from it by the people, and who was an object of contempt or hatred to the whole country. We thus commenced the war as auxiliaries of Shah Soojah ; and with no other ostensible object than that of replacing a refractory prince by one whose interest, or gratitude, would bind him to our service.

“ But, setting aside the question of tyranny and injustice, by what right did the perpetrators of this outrage upon the law of nations squander in so wild a manner the blood and treasure of England ? They well knew that one tithe of even the then probable cost of the expedition would have bought the petty mountain chief, body and soul. They well knew that the salary of a diplomatist of common intelligence at Cabool, (*unless they chose to take his reports through the medium of ignorance, stupidity or treachery*) would have been a considerable part of the entire outlay. They well knew in short—to come to the point—or they ought to have well known, that it would not have cost a hundred thousand pounds to secure the hearty co-operation of Dost Mahomed. What is the co-operation we have secured ? That of a king who is kept in his throne by a hedge of British bayonets, and who would not continue to reign for a week if these were withdrawn ; and that of a peo-

ple whom we have succeeded, after infinite labour and expense, in pervading with one universal sentiment towards us of horror and aversion. Ask the Brahoes and the Ghiljees for their co-operation! As well might the French demand the friendship of the Arabs in Algiers; although we believe in our conscience—and we make the avowal with shame and disgust—that our invasion of Affghanistan is far less justifiable either on moral or political grounds than that of our neighbours on the northern coast of Africa.

“But hitherto we have only touched upon the ostensible cause of this unfortunate expedition: the real cause is the dread of Russian influence being established on the borders of our empire, with a view to an invasion of India. This is the consideration which has induced us to convert into implacable enemies the whole continent from Herat to the ocean, and, by the slaughter of certain chiefs, to kindle a blood-feud with their tribes, which according to the customs of the people is inextinguishable! But before this dreaded influence could affect us through Affghanistan, Persia must have become one of the provinces of Russia; and towards Persia, therefore, we should have directed our energies, instead of misusing them in Affghanistan. There, as in the other case, it must be evident to the meanest intellect, diplomacy, and not the sword, should have been our weapon,—but what was the conduct we pursued? On the one hand our ambassador, by his foolish and obstinate arrogance, made a personal enemy of the Shah, and thus to all intents and purposes laid down his office; and on the other, we threatened the incensed monarch with our armies from the Affghan mountains, and captured one of his islands in the Persian Gulf. The effect of this “little war”—(little in every meaning of the word)—was of course to aggravate, not remove the evil; and the result of the whole is, that the Persian forces are now commanded by Russian instead of English officers, and that the Shah, being left no alternative by British wisdom, has placed himself voluntarily and deliberately within the hug of the Bear.

“There is nothing, in our opinion, more unaccountable in the moral history of mankind than the dread of Russia entertained by the late Government of Great Britain. There is in reality no country in Europe, or out of it, so entirely at our mercy as Russia. An English fleet in the Baltic, a cargo of Birmingham arms in the Euxine—or the mere threat of these—would at once settle any question which could possibly arise between the two countries. Without a navy worthy of the

name, and yet vulnerable in two vital points by a naval power; with Georgia and Circassia in arms, as if for the special protection of the East; with an impoverished treasury, a discontented nobility, and a peasantry dragged in chains to the recruiting depôt,—Russia is absolutely helpless.

“We come at length to the question, what is to be done?—and on this point we derive great hope from the fact that the present Ministry, so far from being pledged to the policy of the last, are pledged against it. We have left a good frontier for a bad one; we have made enemies instead of friends; we have thrust Persia from our own arms into those of Russia. We must *retrace our steps*; and if Ministers suppose us to be

“Stepp’d in so far, that, should we wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o’er,”

we will tell them that we may wade till doomsday in our present course without ever reaching the shore. Let us go on as we do now, and the chronic war we wage beyond our frontier is without end, and our false position with regard to Affghanistan and Persia without hope or help.”

THE END.















